

Council Housing Management Board Thursday 30th July 2026

Meeting summary

Attendees:

(ML) Councillor Martin Loftus – Shadow Member for Homes, Planning and Safer Communities
(BMc) Brian McGaw – Tenant Board member
(KM) Councillor Keith Millar
(AS) Antony Spurway – Vice Chair - Tenant Board member
(JL) Janet Lawton – Head of Council Housing Management Service
(KC) Karen Craig – Performance Lead, Council Housing Management Service
(KK) Councillor Katie Kendrick
(PD) Paul Doughty – Independent Board member
(HS) Holly Southern – Contract and Compliance Inspector, Cheshire West, and Chester Council
(NH) Nigel Hickmott – Tenant Board member
(SE) Stuart Ellis – Finance Manager
(GD) Gemma Davies – Director of Economy & Housing
(KMc) Kathy McArdle – Executive Director of Place & Growth

Apologies:

(CW) Councillor Christine Warner – Chair and Cabinet Member for Homes and Planning
(VA) Victoria Albastroiu – Tenant Board member
(RSH) Ria Siddall-Hardwick – Contracts Manager, Cheshire West and Chester Council
(JW) Jo Worthington – Independent Board Member

1. Welcome

The eleventh Council Housing Management Board took place with Board members being welcomed by the Vice Chair Antony Spurway.

2. Matters Arising from Last Meeting.

The Board noted that actions from the previous meeting are either complete or processing.

Item 6: Spotlight on Asset Management: Stock Condition Surveys. Cllr Loftus noted that he would have liked to see progress on completing more surveys in the first three months of the year.

3. Cabinet Member Update

In the absence of Councillor Warner, JL noted the Cabinet Member update on Page 5 of the Board report. JL advised the Board that two reports would be taken to Cabinet for noting on 16th September – these are

- Update on the outcome of the transition of council housing management and wider housing services
- Annual report of the activities and influence of the CHMB for the last financial year (2025/26)

4. Regulatory Compliance and Performance Board Report Q1

KC explained that the board report was presented differently this time with the format considered a 'work in progress'. KC encouraged feedback on the style and content – if Board members wanted to see additional information. The report needs to serve its purpose of highlighting performance and risk to the Board.

Board requested that performance is shown monthly, as well as for the reporting period.

Action: Reporting tables to be revised to show month by month data.

Cllr Loftus asked how we knew what good performance looked like if we didn't have any comparison. KC explained that we currently don't have access to comparative performance data to help inform target setting. The Board have requested they input into target setting – suggestion this could be done in stages, considering different service areas at a time.

Action: Explore CW&C becoming a member of HouseMark.

Action: Meeting agenda to include discussion on targets

Safety & Quality

Stock Condition data less than 5 years: 79.38% at 1 Apr: Board were concerned that further surveys haven't been completed since last years exercise. JL explained that the service does not have dedicated internal resource for this, hence why last year a contract was awarded for these to be completed. We are however visiting properties that weren't surveyed as part of planning this year's investment work – so this would provide additional up to date information.

In response to a question from Councillor Loftus about resources, JL assured that during the remainder of this year all service areas are being reviewed, to establish what resource is needed to deliver the services. This could identify the need for additional resources, or the moving of resources to address priorities.

Councillor Millar asked if we are not compliant, then what is the plan to become compliant, and wanted it noted that the Board had an ongoing concern about the number of up to date stock condition surveys.

JL explained that we are required to have an accurate record at an individual property level of the condition of our homes. The Board were assured that a significant desktop exercise had been undertaken for properties that had not had a stock condition survey, in order to make our assessment of decent homes as at the end of March. This assessment considered a variety of data sources: repairs, known age of components, investment history, damp & mould reports and complaints to

give us assurance of the condition of the property. The approach to how we did this was shared as Appendix A in the report.

EPC C or above by 2030: Councillor Millar asked what action we were taking with the 5 homes rated F. KC shared that we had undertaken property and customer profiling for all 9 properties rated E&F, so we understood what was needed to increase the rating and who was living in them. This showed all 9 properties were occupied by elderly tenants who had refused works for various different reasons, mainly they didn't want gas heating in their homes. The team are in the process of visiting these tenants so we can understand their needs, survey the internal condition of their homes and discuss what we could do to support them.

Action. Share findings and action in the form of case studies from these visits with the Board.

Damp reports investigated within 10 working days: 105 surveys were completed in Q1 however 3 of them were completed outside of target. 2 were 1 day out of target and the third was 18 days. These are monitored daily and the error was due to human error in this monitoring.

Written summary of Damp works provided to tenants within 3 working days: Currently there is no automated way of monitoring this, so a controlled 'dip sample' was completed for the 105 investigations completed. 1 out of 10 checked was provided to the tenant outside the 3 working day target.

Void Summary: The Board were concerned with the 'legacy' voids position, and reported they are aware that residents are asking questions. JL reminded the Board that last year some voids had been held back from works due to the financial issues between the council and the previous provider. She shared that two contractors are currently employed on void works, and we are negotiating contract terms with a third contractor. We are aiming to clear the backlog by the end of September.

Action: List of 'legacy voids' to be shared with the Board showing addresses by area and a calculation of void rent loss.

Neighbourhood & Community Standard

Board noted the current absence of reports available on the Anti Social Behaviour activity as a concern.

5. Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Financial Report Q1

SE reported that expenditure/ income across the HRA was in line with budget. Interest on loans, and costs of corporate support are transactions that take place at the end of the year so this is not yet showing against expenditure.

Councillor Loftus asked if the overall debt was reducing. SE explained that the planned postponement of debt repayment charges for the years 2026-27 and 2027-28 (being £4 million each) would see the level of HRA debt remain unchanged until 2028-29 when the scheduled repayments would re-start and the amount of debt outstanding would start falling again.

As part of the postponement debt plan it was agreed that the amount of debt due to be repaid in 2026-27 and 2027-28 would instead be repaid in the two years immediately following that in which the debt was originally due to have been paid off. The repayments due in the years 2026-27 and 2027-28 will therefore now take place in 2042-43 and 2043-44 respectively.

The interest payable on the outstanding loans, net of interest receivable on HRA reserve and balances, is circa £2.03 million per year. This will however increase by around £400k going forward as a result of the postponement of debt repayments in 2026-27 and 2027-28.

6. Feedback from Complaints Panel

The Board received feedback from Councillor Keith Millar and the Complaints Panel following a specific meeting to consider their changing remit.

Councillor Millar reported a positive meeting with himself, JL, NH, AS. Discussion agreed that the Panel should become more strategic in their role, and in line with the guidance in the HO Complaints Code see overall data so they can identify trends and direct scrutiny reviews where trends are identified. Discussed tenants being involved in a Stage 2 review as a pilot, and supporting the annual HO Self Assessment.

7. Service Updates

Service Delivery Plan

The draft 2026/27 Council Housing Management Service Delivery Plan was shared with the Board. This includes regulatory requirements with deadlines, and projects planned for this year to improve delivery of consumer standards outcomes.

The Board appreciated the plan and asked for it to include a reporting mechanism so they would be able to keep oversight of progress.

Action: JL to include a column which describes for each action for 'progress oversight'

Procurement of Repairs & Maintenance and Gas Servicing & Compliance Contracts

JL confirmed that 15th July Cabinet had approved this procurement to commence. The R&M contract would receive a short extension until 30th September to allow adequate time to mobilise a new contract. The Gas Contract expires 30th June.

Fusion 21 framework will support the procurement. We will seek input of tenants, both Board members and wider tenant base, into the specification to ensure this reflects what is important to tenants.

8. Any Other Business –

The Board supported CW&C becoming a member of the Social Housing Stigma Campaign. Encouraged by Nigel (who is a Committee member) it was agreed to become a Friend Member with an annual subscription of £1k. The campaign relies on donations so Board were happy to support this to enable the important campaign to continue.

Given one of the Accidents reported (H&S page 20) was a fire in a low rise flat, Councillor Millar asked if we can consider communication to tenants living in flats in relation to fire safety. JL assured that fire safety leaflets are delivered annually, but would feedback to Neighbourhood Team to follow up sharing some lessons learned with the tenants in the specific block concerned.

9.Next meeting

To be held on Thursday 24th September 2026 – the Board agreed this would be at either Joseph Groome Towers or Churchill Court (TBC)