

## **BOLSOVER DISTRICT COUNCIL**

### **Meeting of the Executive on 28<sup>th</sup> July 2025**

### **Housing Service Performance Update 2024-2025, Q1 2025-2026**

### **Report of the Assistant Director for Housing Management**

<b>Classification</b>	This report is Public.
<b>Contact Officer</b>	Victoria Dawson, Assistant Director Housing Management

## **PURPOSE/SUMMARY OF REPORT**

The purpose of the report is to provide Members with performance information for (2024/2025) and for Q1 2025/2026 to understand progress made in meeting actions under the Regulator for Social Housing Improvement Plan, as well as an update on specific areas of activity for the Housing Service.

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## **REPORT DETAILS**

### **1. Background**

- 1.1 The Regulator for Social Housing (RSH) requires the Executive to have oversight of the Housing Service. This is an information report to keep Members informed of the Housing Services performance information for 2024/2025 and Q1 2025/2026 to provide an update regarding actions under the Regulator for Social Housing Improvement Plan as well as an update on other key pieces of work of the Housing Service.
- 1.2 The Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSM) were introduced by the Government, in April 2023 and are designed to help monitor how well landlords are doing at providing quality homes and services, and to understand how they can make improvements. The Council, as a registered provider with more than 1,000 dwellings, is required to annually publish performance information regarding compliance with the Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs). These are split into two parts, 10 performance measures collected through landlord held management information and 12 customer perception survey measures. In order to monitor compliance, we report these figures quarterly to the Housing Liaison Board (HLB) as well as the operational Housing Stock Management Group (HSMG).
- 1.3 The Council is also required to publish information on our complaint performance. The Annual Complaint Handling and Service Improvement

Report must be published by September each year, and to ensure we monitor compliance with timescales and trend data, this information is also presented to the Housing Liaison Board (HLB) and Housing Stock Management Group (HSMG).

## **2. Details of Proposal or Information**

### **Tenant Satisfaction Measures 2024/2025**

- 2.1 As set out at above, Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) were introduced in April 2023, with a requirement that we must submit our annual return for 2024/25 by 30<sup>th</sup> June 2025. We were also required to produce a report which set out the methodology of our approach as well as the performance information. This can be found on the Council's website at [Tenant Satisfaction Measures - Bolsover District Council](#)
- 2.2 The 2024/2025 Survey commenced on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2024, with surveys being sent to all tenants in 3 different tranches. This was a mixture of email, text and postal, dependant on the contact information held on file. The priority method of contact being email, followed by text (where a mobile number was held), and lastly postal. Those receiving a postal copy also received a cover letter with a QR code to allow for online response if the tenant wished to use that method instead.
- 2.3 We received a total of 681 responses, although 9 were removed as duplicate returns from a household, and a further 12 removed due to missing data for the core weighting characteristics. This resulted in a 14.18% return which is higher than the 11% we required.
- 2.4 The Council, and Dragonfly Management have worked with tenants to agree a tenant friendly version of the performance information. This is attached at **Appendix 1** and measures the Council's performance against the national average from 2023/2024. This will be updated when the national average for 2024/2025 is published. This is grouped into the themes the RSH split the TSMs into.
- 2.5 Overall satisfaction is 86% compared to 86.9% last year and well above the national average of 71.3%. 18 of the 22 measures exceed the national average for 2023/2024, 2 are comparable and just 2 below.
- 2.6 Anti-social behaviour (ASB) cases have increased from 56.5 per 1000 homes to 71.1. Since we reported last year, we have done some work around extracting the information in a more comprehensive way to give a more accurate figure. It is noted that this is higher than the national average but the tenant's responses with regards to their satisfaction with our approach to handling ASB is 65.8% well above the national average of 57.8%.
- 2.7 There was one Stage 2 complaint that was answered one day late which has affected the complaints figures, giving a 95% compliance rate with the Housing Ombudsman timescales. The tenant responses with regards to

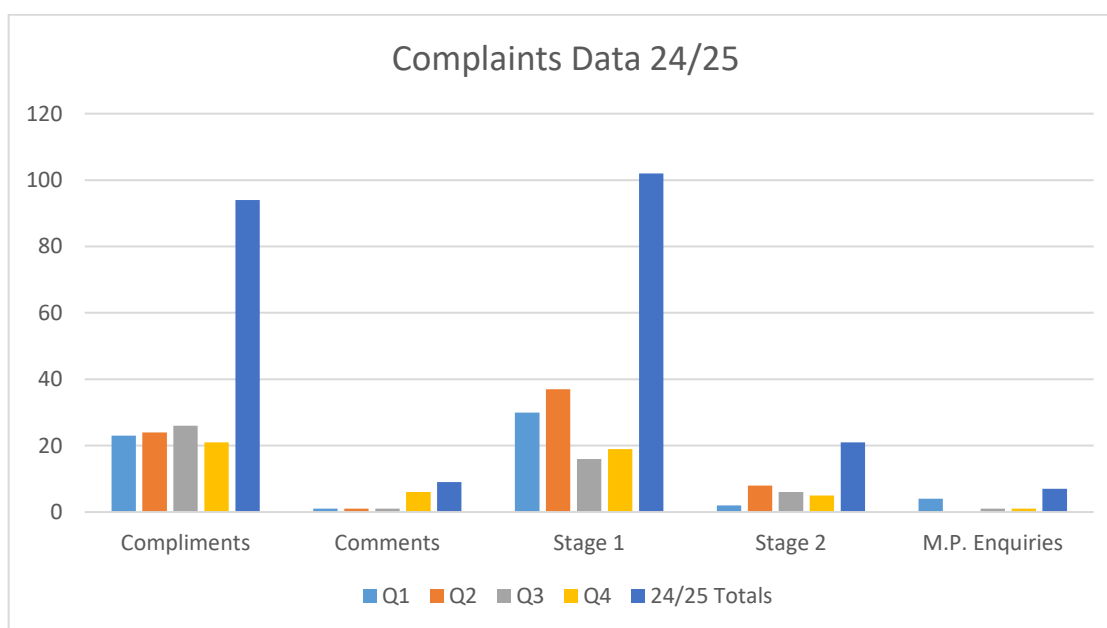
satisfaction with the landlord's approach to handling complaints, whilst low at 37.8% is again above the national average of 34.5%.

- 2.8 Gas compliance is below the 100% compliance requirement, at 99.5%. This was as a result of not being able to gain access in 24 properties. Dragonfly Management have been working with Legal Services on tenant access issues. All non-compliance properties have Worcester combi boilers with integral safety features mitigating risk to tenants.
- 2.10 With regards to the remaining Management Information measures we are performing better than the national average on all criteria. With regards to tenant perception survey measures, we were above national average on all our tenants' responses. This is reflective by the green arrows on the Appendix 1 poster.
- 2.11 We have also done a comparison on last years' results which is shown at **Appendix 2**. Whilst a number of the measures have a slightly lower satisfaction rate, others have improved. All measures remain above the national average for 2023/2024. It is likely that our lower rates are reflective of the increase of returns via email/internet (which generates lowers satisfaction rates), and the fact that this year's sample had a higher proportion of responses from general needs housing which are traditionally less satisfied than our housing for older people and sheltered housing tenants.

## **Complaints Performance 2024/2025**

- 2.12 In April 2024, the Housing Ombudsman Complaints Handling Code became statutory. This set out a single, robust set of standards which will result in best practice for complaint handling by the Council. That is to be fair, efficient, and accessible. The aims of the Code promote the progressive use of complaints to support effective complaint handling and prevention alongside learning and development.
- 2.13 Complaints are handled corporately, but with Housing Management working closely with the Customer Service, Standards & Complaints Manager we published an annual report which set out how we handle complaints and use knowledge from complaints to enhance the services we provide. This report must be published by 30<sup>th</sup> September 2025, and we will also be looking to produce a tenant friendly version.
- 2.14 The tables below shows a breakdown of Compliments, Comments and Complaints (CCC) received during the year 2024/2025 for the Housing Service, including Dragonfly Management.

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	24/25 Totals
<b>Compliments</b>	23	24	26	21	94
<b>Comments</b>	1	1	1	6	9
<b>Stage 1</b>	30	37	16	19	102
<b>Stage 2</b>	2	8	6	5	21
<b>M.P. Enquiries</b>	4	0	1	1	7



- 2.15 It should be noted that these only relate to those which would fall under the Housing ombudsman remit and so exclude any CCC's in connection to the Homeless Team or the Allocations Team.
- 2.16 The table below shows a comparison of all Housing related compliments, comments and complaints, for all service areas for 2023/2024 and 2024/2025. It is noted that the number of compliments received has doubled, whilst the number of complaints remains as similar figure. Whilst there has been an increase in the number of complaints which are escalated to stage 2, there have been no ombudsman investigations during this period

	2023/2024	2024/2025
Compliments	62	138
Comments	11	10
MP	108	21
Stage 1	109	127
Stage 2	13	25

- 2.17 Using the information we obtain from complaints the Housing Department and Dragonfly Management have made improvements for the benefit of tenants. These are reviewed regularly and documented within the Bolsover Homes newsletter.

### **Q1 2025/2026 - Performance Data**

- 2.18 The RSH expects us to put information about our performance in the public domain in a way which is accessible to tenants so they can hold us to account. We have agreed a “tenant friendly” version as to how we will present this information and each quarter it is updated to the website, displayed in the Contact Centres, and then contained within the next Bolsover Homes newsletter. Attached at **Appendix 3** is the summary for Q1 – 2025/2026.
- 2.19 In addition the TSM Management Information is attached at **Appendix 4** and shows a positive start to the new financial year with all corporate targets being met save for Gas Compliance which is at 99.5%.
- 2.20 Complaints data for Quarter 1 2025/2026 is set out below. This is broken down by those which are within the Housing Ombudsman jurisdiction and those which are not with a combined total. When comparing these with

	Quarter 1 (Housing Ombudsman Jurisdiction)	Quarter 1 (Homeless, Allocations and Careline)	Quarter 1 Total
Compliments	20	3	23
Comments	5	0	5
Stage 1 Complaints	25	4	29
Stage 2 Complaints	4	7	10
MP Enquiries	2	1	3

### **Regulator for Social Housing Improvement Plan**

- 2.21 The Council was inspected in August 2024 and received a C2 grading which recognised the Council has provided assurance and met the consumer standards in many areas, but identified some areas where improvement is needed.

- 2.22 The Housing Management Team, working alongside Dragonfly Management, continues to work with the Regulator to develop an improvement plan to address the key themes they have identified as well as looking at how we can continue to demonstrate continuous compliance with the standards and strive for a C1 grading.
- 2.23 The key areas of focus identified by the Regulator are:
- Completing the full Stock Condition Survey and using this data to meet the requirements of the Decent Homes Standards. The results will show where we need to make improvements to our housing stock and will drive future capital spend.
  - Delivering fair and equitable outcomes to tenants – We need to recognise and understand the individual and whole tenant base. We then need to use this data to shape the services we provide to benefit all of our tenants. By understanding our individual and whole tenant base we can make sure the services provided are what our tenants need and ensure services are accessible.
  - Complaint handling - We need to ensure the complaint process is accessible, assess the outcome of complaints in more depth, recognise lessons learned, and where we have made changes to process and procedure, ensure these are explained to tenants.
  - Performance - It is important that tenants can hold us to account and to do that they need to know how we are performing. Therefore, we need to publish information in an accessible way and in several different places. We will be working with the Tenant Groups to establish how tenants want to receive this information.
- 2.24 We have been meeting with the Regulator monthly to monitor progress against the Improvement Plan and will be meeting quarterly in 2025. We must update tenants on the progress to date and have agreed a summary document with the Regulators. This is shared with tenants at the HLB meeting which meets quarterly as well as being published on the website in the minutes. This is included at **Appendix 5**. A more comprehensive version is discussed at the Operational HSMG meeting, which is held bi-monthly.
- 2.25 A key theme which fed through all the comments made by the Regulator was a lack of data analysis and that until this element is resolved we will not be able to improve our grading, This includes the need to collect data, store it, analyse it and use it to make service improvements for the benefits of tenants. A specific Housing Performance Manager post was approved by the Employment and Personnel Committee and Council, and we have been able to appoint to this post from an internal candidate, anticipated start date 4<sup>th</sup> August 2025.
- 2.26 The proposed post will work across all areas of Housing, including working with Dragonfly Management Repairs and Maintenance and working alongside the Complaints team.

## **Stock Condition Survey**

- 2.27 The Stock Condition Survey undertaken by Savills has concluded with access to 92.7% of stock being achieved. This data alongside additional checks and balances of our own data has led us to be able to report an accurate level of non-decency stock at just 1%.
- 2.28 There were approximately 350 properties we were unable to access. The RSH has stated they expect we must achieve 100% Stock Condition Surveys and together Housing Management and Dragonfly Management have a plan to carry out inspections prior to March 2026. Whilst access may be difficult for some of these properties, we have been liaising with the legal department about how this can be achieved.
- 2.29 We are looking at a number of options for how we can complete the remaining properties and for a future rolling programme. A further report will be provided to Executive with options and costings in the Autumn.
- 2.30 We are meeting with the finance department to look at the 30-year HRA Business Plan and to ensure the capital programmes are updated in light of the data we have received.

## **Awaab's Law**

- 2.31 Awaab's Law, was introduced in the Social Housing Regulation Act 2023. This followed the death of Awaab Ishak, a two-year old child living with his parents who sadly passed away from a respiratory condition, which was found to be caused by damp and mould in the flat the family occupied.
- 2.32 From 27<sup>th</sup> October 2025 social landlords will need to investigate and fix dangerous damp and mould in set time periods, as well as repair all emergency hazards within 24 hours. There will be a phased implementation of Awaab's Law, in 2026 the requirements will expand to apply to a wider range of hazards, excess cold and excess heat; falls; structural collapse; fire, electrical and explosions; and hygiene hazards. In 2027 the requirements of Awaab's Law will expand to the remaining hazards as defined by the HHSRS (excluding overcrowding).
- 2.33 On 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2025, Executive approved the Damp and Mould Policy which sets out how we will ensure we meet our legal obligations, specifically how we will triage and inspect reports of damp and mould and how we will ensure we meet the timescales as set out in Awaab's Law.
- 2.34 On 25<sup>th</sup> June 2025 MHCLG published draft guidance for social landlords to support in implementing the new legislation. What is key is that Awaab's Law uses a person centered approach and that a hazard does not need to be at Category 1 level under HHSRS where a particular tenant is at greater risk from hazardous conditions for example because of their age or health related vulnerabilities. It is therefore imperative we know who is behind the door to our homes. We are undertaking a substantial piece of work in gaining updated details about our tenants, the household make up and size as well as the households vulnerabilities.

- 2.35 Also of note is that the legal obligations begin when the landlord becomes aware of the potential hazard and this could be if notified by a third party, including a contractor or someone acting on behalf of the tenant e.g. a Councillor. We will need to ensure that all contractors who enter Council properties on behalf of the Council know how to report instances of damp and mould to the Council. This will be the same for any other Council department visiting the property e.g., benefits visiting officers.
- 2.36 The guidance suggests that the landlord may wish to provide tenants with a guide to help them identify hazards so they can be triaged more effectively. This is something we are keen to work with Dragonfly Management on, alongside looking at utilising remote inspections, videos, photos etc.
- 2.37 We will need to closely monitor the impact that compliance with this legislation has on the wider team, as it is anticipated this will create additional resource pressures.

### **Electrical Safety in the Social Rented Sector**

- 2.38 Following the formation of the Electrical Safety in Social Rented Homes Working Group in 2021, a consultation in summer 2022, invited views on proposals to introduce mandatory checks for electrical installation, bringing parity with the private rented sector, and requiring mandatory checks of appliances provided by social landlords.
- 2.39 On 25<sup>th</sup> June 2025 government issued a response to the consultation with the conclusion being that there would be mandatory electrical safety checks at least every five years in the social rented sector and made it a requirement that a copy of the EICR report is issued to social tenants within 28 days, or to any new tenant before they occupy the property. A copy of the EICR report can be issued to the tenant in person, by post or electronically.
- 2.40 It was noted that the EICR reports are technical and potentially confusing for tenants and so landlords are encouraged to provide a summary sheet or cover letter alongside the report that explains the content to tenants.
- 2.41 It is proposed that these changes will commence in November 2025 for new tenancies and May 2026 for existing tenancies. We are currently working towards achieving an EICR every 5 years by the end of this financial year.

### **Decent Homes 2**

- 2.42 The Decent Homes Standard (DHS) was first implemented in 2001, and last updated in 2006, acting as a technical standard specifying minimum criteria that social landlords must meet to ensure their properties are decent.
- 2.43 Beyond basic health and safety requirements, the DHS defines the features of a decent rented home, including effective heating and insulation, the facilities that should be available, and the general state of repair. The DHS is structured to provide clear thresholds for social landlords to take action to improve their



stock over time, for example by requiring landlords to upgrade kitchens and bathrooms after a stated period to keep facilities up to a reasonably modern standard.

- 2.44 In the social rented sector, the RSH regulates the DHS through its Safety and Quality Standard. Should the DHS be updated following the consultation, it is proposed the government will issue a direction to the Regulator of Social Housing to set a new standard requiring social housing providers to meet the new DHS.
- 2.45 On 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2025, the government launched a 10-week consultation on proposed changes to the Decent Homes Standard. The proposed changes are.
- Updating the definition of disrepair – removing the age requirement and updating thresholds.
  - Revising the list of building components which must be kept in a reasonable state of repair.
  - Revising our approach to facilities so that landlords need to provide three out of the four facilities listed in proposal 2.
  - Introducing a window restrictor requirement.
  - Considering a new home security requirement.
  - Considering a requirement for floor coverings for new tenancies.
  - Streamlining and updating the thermal comfort requirements.
  - Introducing a new standard for damp and mould.
- 2.46 Housing Management and Dragonfly Management will work together to provide a comprehensive response to this consultation, with Member approval via Housing Stock Management Group (HSMG).

### **Competency Standards for Housing Managers**

- 2.47 Between February and April 2024, the Government consulted on proposals to introduce a new, regulatory standard relating to the competence and conduct of social housing staff. It would ensure that staff have up-to-date skills, knowledge, and experience, and that they exhibit the right behaviours to deliver a high quality, professional service and treat residents with respect. This standard would require senior housing managers to hold a Level 4 Housing qualification and senior housing executives to hold a Level 5 Housing qualification.
- 2.48 On 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2025 government announced that the Competence and Conduct Standard for Social Housing will be implemented from October 2026, with a three-year transition period for most providers. Further details are expected to follow but it is anticipated the Housing Management team will have 14 members of staff who require the qualification, and a further 12 within Dragonfly Management repairs and asset management teams. Estimated costs for this training were included in the Medium-Term Financial Plan approved by Members in January 2025.

## **Further Reforms to Right to Buy**

2.49 The Government has also announced that following the reduction in maximum right to buy discount last Autumn, and a period of consultation, that there will be further reforms to the Right to Buy. These include:

- increasing the length of time someone needs to have been a public sector tenant to qualify for Right to Buy from 3 to 10 years.
- reforming discounts so they start at 5% of the property value, rising by 1% for every extra year an individual is a secure tenant up to the maximum of 15% of the property value or the cash discount cap (whichever is lower); and
- exempting newly built social homes from Right to Buy for 35 years, ensuring councils are not losing homes before they have recovered the costs of building them.

2.50 Legislation will need to be implemented to bring these reforms into force, however it was announced they will reform the receipts regime and extend existing flexibilities on spending Right to Buy receipts indefinitely. Councils will also continue to be able to retain the share of the receipts that was previously returned to HM Treasury. In addition, from 2026-27, Councils will be able to combine receipts with grant funding for affordable housing to accelerate council delivery of new homes.

## **Easy read tenancy agreement**

2.51 The National Literacy trust reports approximately 18% of adults in England are considered functionally illiterate, meaning they struggle with basic reading and writing skills. This equates to roughly 1 in 6 adults. Our tenancy agreement is 20 pages long. It was updated in 2022 to make it an easier layout, but we have recognised that in order to ensure that we are taking into account our tenants need, an easy read tenancy agreement would be desirable. We are therefore working on a pictorial version with just a short sentence to sit alongside this for the main areas of the tenancy agreement.

2.52 Currently whilst we do have translators available for tenancy sign up visits we do not offer TA in different languages and this pictorial version would also assist non-English-speaking tenants to understand the terms of their tenancy agreement.

## **Reasons for Recommendation**

3.1 The Regulator for Social Housing has emphasised there needs to be greater oversight of the Housing Service by Executive. This is an information report to keep Members informed of the Housing Services performance information for 2024/2025 and Q1 2025/2026 to provide an update regarding actions under the Regulator for Social Housing Improvement Plan as well as an update on other key pieces of work of the Housing Service.

#### 4 Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

- 4.1 Not applicable to this report as providing an overview of performance and for information only.

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#### RECOMMENDATION(S)

1. That the performance information, and updates against the Regulator for Social Housing Improvement Plan are noted.

Approved by Portfolio Holder for Housing

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#### IMPLICATIONS:

<b><u>Finance and Risk</u></b>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Details:</b>		
There are no financial implications rising directly from this report.		
On behalf of the Section 151 Officer		
<b><u>Legal (including Data Protection)</u></b>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Details:</b>		
The requirement to comply with relevant legislation is set out within the report		
On behalf of the Solicitor to the Council		
<b><u>Staffing</u></b>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Details:</b>		
There are no staffing implications rising directly from this report.		
On behalf of the Head of Paid Service		
<b><u>Equality and Diversity, and Consultation</u></b>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Details:</b>		
<b><u>Environment</u></b>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Details:</b>		

## **DECISION INFORMATION:**

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Please indicate which threshold applies:</b>	
<b>Is the decision a Key Decision?</b> A Key Decision is an Executive decision which has a significant impact on two or more wards in the District or which results in income or expenditure to the Council above the following thresholds:	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Revenue (a)</b> Results in the Council making Revenue Savings of £75,000 or more or <b>(b)</b> Results in the Council incurring Revenue Expenditure of £75,000 or more.	(a) <input type="checkbox"/> (b) <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Capital (a)</b> Results in the Council making Capital Income of £150,000 or more or <b>(b)</b> Results in the Council incurring Capital Expenditure of £150,000 or more.	(a) <input type="checkbox"/> (b) <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>District Wards Significantly Affected:</b> <i>(to be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards in the District)</i> Please state below which wards are affected or tick <b>All</b> if all wards are affected:	All <input type="checkbox"/>

<b>Is the decision subject to Call-In?</b> <i>(Only Key Decisions are subject to Call-In)</i>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If No, is the call-in period to be waived in respect of the decision(s) proposed within this report? <i>(decisions may only be classified as exempt from call-in with the agreement of the Monitoring Officer)</i>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Consultation carried out:</b> <i>(this is any consultation carried out prior to the report being presented for approval)</i>	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Leader <input type="checkbox"/> Deputy Leader <input type="checkbox"/> Executive <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SLT <input type="checkbox"/> Relevant Service Manager <input type="checkbox"/> Members <input type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/>	

## Links to Council Ambition: Customers, Economy, Environment, Housing

Ambition: Customers

Priorities:

- *Continuous improvement to service delivery through innovation, modernisation and listening to customers*
- *Improving the customer experience and removing barriers to accessing information and services*
- *Promoting equality, diversity, and inclusion, and supporting and involving vulnerable and disadvantaged people*

Ambition: Housing

Priority:

- *Building more, good quality, affordable housing, and being a decent landlord*

### **DOCUMENT INFORMATION:**

Appendix No	Title
1	Tenant Satisfaction Measures 2024-2025 summary
2	Tenant Satisfaction Measures Comparison
3	Tenant Satisfaction Measures 2025/2026 Quarter one MI data
4	Tenant Poster Q1 2025/206 Performance
5	Tenant Friendly RSH Improvement Plan

### **Background Papers**

***(These are unpublished works which have been relied on to a material extent when preparing the report. They must be listed in the section below. If the report is going to Executive, you must provide copies of the background papers).***