



Housing Improvement Programme Board Meeting Minutes

Meeting:	Housing Improvement Programme Board (HIPB)
Venue:	Committee Room 1 (and hybrid via Teams as required/agreed)
Date:	18 th December 2025
Time:	17:00-18:30

Member Attendees: Cllr Rob Lillis (Cllr RL) – Chair & Programme Member Sponsor, Cllr Kate Knott (Cllr KK) – Vice Chair & Board Member, Cllr Dave Blackwell (Cllr DB) Leader of the Council and Board Member, Cllr Warren Gibson (Cllr WG) – Deputy Leader of the Council and Board Member, Cllr Jamie Huntman (Cllr JH) – Board Member

Officer Attendees: Angela Hutchings (AH) – Project Sponsor, Ian Butt (IB) - Project Sponsor, Lance Wosko (LW) - Section 151 Officer, Angela Law (AL) - Monitoring Officer

Guests: Steve Colk (SC) - Interim Head of Housing Technical Services, Linda Curtis (LC) – Compliance Manager, Michael Lerpiniere (ML) - Interim Head of Housing Management, Hannah McInally (HM) – Project Manager, Fatima Bagam (FB) – HMS Project Manager, Leigh Donegan (LD) – Administrator, Damian Roche (DR) - HQN

Apologies: Cllr Grace Watson (Cllr GW) – Chair of Overview & Scrutiny Committee, Rebecca Outram (RO) – Policy Officer, Chris Stratford (CS) Programme Director, Harvinder Parhar (HP) - Interim Head of Strategic Housing Services, Damien Ghela (DG) – SRO

Ref	Item	Lead
1.	Welcome, Introductions & Declarations of interest <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Apologies received.• The meeting was recorded for note taking purposes.• No declarations of interest were made.	Chair
2.	Health & Safety compliance [standing item] <i>Progress update:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• FRA remedial works have not progressed since last Board meeting as the MCP Plus contract renewal is still awaiting sign off. All remedial works have been scoped, budgeted, planned and are ready to commence once the contract is finalised.• Two internal audits have been carried out for Fire Safety and Health & Safety compliance. The Fire Safety audit determined satisfactory assurance and positive feedback on progress and how the programme is being managed. The Health & Safety audit determined high assurance of the work across the Big 6 compliance streams.• Outstanding safety inspections are due to refused access. Every opportunity is provided to avoid legal action being taken. DR advised that no access is a concern across the sector. ACTION: DR to share HQN research on no access. <i>Stock Condition Survey programme update:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• As of 4 December 2025, the stock condition survey programme was at 76.29% completion. Concerns were raised by Members why these were not completed. A percentage of them related to garages and not residential properties.	DR

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation plan for January underway to complete the remaining stock condition surveys, with a focus on outstanding dwellings with no access. A number of garage and external surveys to be commenced. <p>ACTION: Breakdown of the dwelling type for the outstanding stock condition surveys to be provided at next Board.</p> <p><i>MCP Plus contract update:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Legal to speak with Council solicitors on final amends to the MCP Plus contract before sign off. Tender process for new repairs and capital works contractor went live on 16 December 2025 and closes 16 January 2026. Due to the size and significance of contract, AH requested a report on the new contract requirements and process is provided to Members to ensure transparency and shared understanding. This is to be followed by a briefing session to permit members the opportunity to seek any clarifications required. A full suite of communications for this contract is also to be considered. <p>DECISION: MCP Plus contract to remain on the Corporate Risk Register until 31 March 2026.</p> <p>ACTION: Draft report on tender process and requirements of new repairs and capital works contract for Members.</p> <p>ACTION: Briefing for Members on new repairs and capital works contract to be held in January 2026.</p> <p>ACTION: Communications plan for new repairs and capital works contract to be considered and planned with support of colleagues in Comms team.</p> <p><i>Other:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chair asked for confirmation on when the viament for the warden call system was completed. Confirmation that the viament was published on 15 December 2025 and the 5-day call in period ends on 22 December 2025. When Chair raised concern regarding the risk of the delay in completing the viament, AH confirmed that the was due to the significant overspend needing to be investigated. 	AH/IB SC SC HM/SC
3.	<p>Housing Improvement Programme update</p> <p><i>Milestone update:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two milestones have moved to Red RAG status. The milestone relating to fire doors has moved to Red RAG due to manufacturing time required may not permit completion of fire door remedial programme being completed within the financial year. Following questions from Members, clarification was made that the manufacturing time is an industry standard due to the strict compliance and legislative requirements of fire doors. The milestone relating to the Asset Management Plan has moved to Red RAG due to initial findings of Decent Homes Standards compliance from stock condition surveys, indicating that significant investment is needed. AH indicated that timescales and budgets for achieving full compliance with the Decent Homes Standards will 	

require a risk-based assessment to determine a workable strategy for expenditure and delivery.

- DR advised that from experience with another local authority, a minimum of 90% compliance with the Decent Homes Standards is required to satisfactorily achieve compliance with the Regulator of Social Housing's Consumer Standards. From his experience, local authorities must have an achievable 2-year plan in place to achieve and retain 100% compliance with the Decent Homes Standards to satisfy the Consumer Standards. Without a similar plan in place, there is a risk that Castle Point BC will not improve on its C4 grading.

HIPB Work Plan 2026 approval:

ACTION: Add KPI for recurring damp and mould cases.

HM

ACTION: Add KPI for number of cases issued by Housing Ombudsman to complaints reporting.

HM

DECISION: HIPB Work Plan 2026 approved under direction that additional changes can be made at a later date.

Chair

Housing Management System update:

- FB indicated that original project budget and resource requirements for the Housing Management System were underestimated. Whilst the modules to form an integrated Housing Management System have been purchased, the resource required to deliver these have not been.
- Failings in communication meant lessons learnt from the previous HMS implementation attempt were not shared/reviewed prior to commencing this project. AH indicated that this internal audit review determined failure in project management and whilst the contributing factors are not the same there is some overlap. The Chair asked why the findings were not shared with the project team.
- The focus of this project is on getting the rents system in place by the end of the year. A risk-based assessment will be required on how to manage the implementation of additional modules following this.
- The Housing Management System project is to be rebaselined through project board governance as required.

ACTION: MRI One to be contacted to provide cost indication of providing required resources to deliver this project.

FB

HRA Review update – verbal:

- HRA modelling continuing at pace and budgets are being re-aligned. An external independent assessor has been selected to Quality Assess this work.

Regulator update – verbal:

- Positive meeting with the Regulator held on 16 December 2025.
- Vice Chair raised concerns with why timescales for project delivery are slipping and whether the Regulator are concerned by this. AH shares the Vice Chair's concerns.

ACTION: Concerns on slippage of project timescales to be shared with HIP team.

AH

4.	AOB Next meeting: 22 nd January 2026	ALL