

Housing Improvement Programme Board Meeting Minutes

Meeting: Housing Improvement Programme Board (HIPB)
Venue: Committee Room 1 (and hybrid via Teams as required/agreed)
Date: 24th September 2026
Time: 16:30-18:00

Member Attendees: Cllr Rob Lillis (Cllr RL) – Chair & Programme Member Sponsor, Cllr Kate Knott (Cllr KK) – Board Member, Cllr Dave Blackwell (Cllr DB) Leader of the Council and Board Member,

Officer Attendees: Angela Hutchings (AH) – Project Sponsor, Angela Law (AL) - Monitoring Officer, Ian Butt (IB) - Project Sponsor

Guests: Chris Stratford (CS) Programme Director, Steve Colk (SC) - Interim Head of Housing Technical Services, Michael Lerpiniere (ML) - Interim Head of Housing Management, Colin Moone (CM) - Head of Strategic Services, Leigh Donegan (LD) – Administrator, Becky Hennessey (BH) - Senior Leasehold and Customer Relations Officer, Tony Kiernan (TK) – HMS Programme Manager, Vincent Rose (VR) – Housing Options Manager, Damian Roche (DR) – HQN

Apologies: Hannah McNally (HM) – Project Manager, Rebecca Outram (RO) – Policy Officer, Linda Curtis (LC) Compliance Manager, Cllr Jamie Huntman (Cllr JH) – Board Member, Cllr Warren Gibson (Cllr WG) – Vice Chair & Deputy Leader of the Council, Cllr Grace Watson (Cllr GW) – Chair of Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Ref	Item	Lead
1.	Welcome, Introductions & Declaration of Interests Apologies received	Chair
2.	MRI Housing Management System <i>Phase 2 module timeline</i> The current high-level plan for delivery of the outstanding MRI HMS modules, covering the period September 2026 to 2028. - Module priorities have been adjusted: Direct Debits and the Private Housing Sector module have been pulled forward. These are considered critical for income stability, rent collection, and council tax payments. - The Repairs & Maintenance module has now formally commenced; first consultancy days are scheduled before the end of September 2026. - The vendor has flagged a risk that, due to a gap in activity, the organisation may reach the end of its contract period without utilising all contracted consultancy days. The PM will review the forward plan to identify modules that can be brought forward and days consumed productively. - Councillor Lillis raised the question of which modules must be sufficiently advanced to support the targeted upgrade to Consumer Standard C2 (Regulatory grade) in 2027. The response confirmed that while full delivery of all modules before the C2 inspection is unlikely, the regulator will expect a firm plan with early elements	

	evidenced as on track. Assurance, evidence and credible roadmap are as important as module completion itself. • Damian Roche (HQN) endorsed the prioritisation order, noting that repairs and maintenance of data quality is critical at this stage. He confirmed that Stage 7 (Total Mobile) is valuable but not critical for the consumer standard rating. • It was agreed that the HMS update will be a standing agenda item at future HIPB meetings. ACTION: Present HMS progress update at every future HIPB meeting as a standing item.	Tony Kiernan
3.	Housing Allocations and Homelessness Service Discussion covered the current pressures and compliance requirements in relation to Housing Options, Temporary Accommodation and associated compliance obligations. • The service holds households with complex needs (e.g. requiring 3–4 bedroom properties) which are in short supply in the borough. • Families in temporary accommodation who also have work commitments in the area create additional pressures on allocation. • Compliance of temporary accommodation is an area of focus — officers need to ensure that evidence requirements are met, and that compliance issues are not left unresolved. • Concern was expressed that staff should not be placed in a position of having to wait for external oversight to resolve issues that should be managed proactively at an operational level. ACTION: Ensure compliance documentation for temporary accommodation is kept up to date and accessible within the housing management system.	Linda Curtis
4.	Housing Improvement Programme <i>Resident Engagement</i> • The programme records numbers of residents engaged and the different methods of engagement being offered. • Damian Roche (HQN) challenged the team to capture not just engagement numbers but the "so what" i.e. the outcomes and actions that result from engagement activity. • It was confirmed that outcomes are being recorded, and examples were given of physical repairs and service changes resulting directly from walk-out feedback. • Concern was raised about the location of some engagement events — previous events placed adjacent to unrelated organisation's active space had led to confusion for residents, who directed	

planning-related frustrations at engagement officers inappropriately. • Future dates are to be confirmed. A suggestion was made to plan events for January with some flexibility on exact dates, rather than committing to a specific date during adverse weather months. • All mock inspections are targeted to be completed by early December, with the January period reserved for improvements and preparation ahead of any formal regulatory engagement. ACTION: For every engagement event, record not just attendance numbers but the outcomes — what changed as a direct result. ACTION: Review and confirm walk-about locations to ensure they are appropriate and do not cause confusion for residents. ACTION: Confirm January walk-about dates (approximate month rather than specific date is acceptable given seasonal conditions). <i>Critical path to C2 - Mock inspection progress</i> • A RFQ to procure an external assurance provider to conduct the mock inspection was published on 10th September. • The deadline for return bids to is midday on 2nd October. • Following assessment of bids an external provider will be selected. • It is expected that the mock inspection process will begin subject to discussions with the preferred bidder. The full mock inspection is expected to take 4 weeks to complete • A mock judgement should be received by the end of November 2026. • The full report with recommendations will be shared with HIPB • Housing teams will utilise the recommendations from the mock inspection mock judgement to close evidence gaps and confirm priorities in preparedness for RSH inspection. • In response to a question from Cllr Lillis, the three main areas of concern in terms of the critical path to C2 are: ➤ Tenant engagement ➤ Partnerships ➤ Decent Homes. <i>HIPB Work Plan including voids</i> • HQN welcomed the focus on vacant properties, noting that turnaround speed is an area where many organisations underperform. He requested that targets be confirmed for each stage of the void process and that these be reported against going forward. • The Board reviewed damp and mould data. Damian Roche queried whether the organisation is fully compliant with	Michael L Michael L Michael L
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Awaab's Law and requested that future reporting include number of closed cases, works completed, and whether all cases were resolved within target timescales. No inspections were reported as outstanding. The board acknowledged good progress.

- Under decent homes, the dashboard showed a peak of 271 non-compliant homes in April, reducing to 155 outstanding as at August. The plan is to achieve 100% Decent Homes compliance by 31 March. The programme and budget are in place, with the delivery programme already built into the forecast. The Board noted that properties failing in 2027/28 are already accounted for within the programme.
- HQN noted strong repairs performance overall and gave credit to the team. He queried the level of cancelled orders (approximately 10–15% of jobs raised) and asked whether themes could be identified, particularly around specific trades, and whether any emergency or Awaab's Law-related jobs were being cancelled.
- The Head of Service clarified that: (a) contractors are not permitted to cancel jobs without Council consent; (b) cancellations relate either to jobs raised in error or jobs where the decision has been taken to carry out a more substantial repair (e.g. full kitchen or roof replacement rather than a reactive patch). Cancellation decisions are documented and approved at monthly/weekly L1 operational meetings. The Board was satisfied with this explanation.
- A Member suggested that the "Repairs & Maintenance" complaint category could usefully be broken down further to distinguish between quality of work and communication/notification failures, as the two issues require different interventions.
- The call centre answer rate has dipped from 97% to 90%, though it remains above target. Context was provided: 218 responsive repairs were completed in a single week, indicating very high service volume. The Board was asked to keep this metric on its radar; if it falls below target next month, a fuller explanation will be provided.
- Gaps in the data were noted for June/July for CBC Housing phone statistics. This was explained by staff leave and the fact that some data is owned by another area of the Council (the main CPBC Housing switchboard), which the officer is working to improve. The Board acknowledged the dependency and accepted the explanation.

	• ACTION: Confirm and report void turnaround targets for each stage of the void process at the next meeting. • ACTION: Enhance damp and mould reporting to include number of closed cases, completion of works, and confirmation that all cases were resolved within target timescales, evidencing compliance with Awaab's Law. • ACTION: Officers: Provide a breakdown analysis of cancelled repair orders — identify any themes by trade type and confirm that no emergency or Awaab's Law-related jobs have been cancelled without a visit. • ACTION: Consider splitting the Complaints dashboard category of "Repairs & Maintenance" into quality and communication sub-categories. • ACTION: Monitor call center answer rate (KPI 16) closely; escalate to the Board with full context if it drops below target. • ACTION: Enter post-inspection defect data into the performance spreadsheet ahead of the next HIPB meeting.	Steve C Linda C Steve C Michael L Michael L Steve C
5.	AOB • Next Meeting: 22nd October 2026	