

Response from the Member Responsible for Complaints (MRC)

As the Member Responsible for Complaints, I have met with our housing team to review and scrutinise the 2025 annual submissions, including the self-assessment against the Code, the annual complaints report, and the service improvement plan.

Our self-assessment against the Housing Complaints Handling Code shows that we believe that we are compliant in all areas of the Code's requirements.

The annual complaints report reveals an increase in the number of complaints for 2024-25 as compared with the previous year; up from 145 in 2023-24 to 175 in 2024-25.

While this is regrettable, we believe that the increase partly reflects the difficulties that accompanied the change of maintenance and repairs contractor, with the outgoing contractor providing a declining service once they had decided not to bid for the new contract.

Another factor was the Housing Ombudsman's updating of the code in 2024 to make it easier for complaints to be registered.

As a Housing service, we are committed to improving the support we give to residents in our accommodation. As part of this process, we took the annual complaints report to the council's Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee on 5 November 2025 to receive feedback and questioning from committee members.

We also take our complaints data to the Tenant and Landlord Improvement Panel (TLIP) for review and scrutiny. TLIP is made up of volunteer residents in our accommodation, housing officers, and elected councillors. It is chaired by a resident volunteer and provides robust challenge and constructive feedback.

The Housing Improvement Programme continues to drive service change, supported by a structured "lessons learned" log that is reviewed for patterns and shared with managers.

New policies on compensation, reasonable adjustments, and customer contact have been introduced to promote consistency and fairness. In January 2025, managers handling Stage 1 and Stage 2 complaints received training to strengthen their understanding of legislation, best practice, and complaint handling standards.

Priorities for 2025/26 include monitoring the impact of the new repairs contractor to ensure a smooth transition, positive tenant engagement, and clear service expectations from the outset. Housing will continue to embed the “lessons learned” process, using feedback from tenants and staff to drive continuous improvement and ensure remedies are applied consistently in line with Ombudsman guidance.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Stephen Conway". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

Cllr Stephen Conway

Executive Member for Housing, Partnerships, and the Local Plan

Leader of Council