

 Brent	Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee 19 November 2025
	Report from the Corporate Director of Resident and Housing Services Lead Cabinet Member for Housing – Councillor Fleur Donnelly-Jackson
	Update on the Housing Management Advisory Board From the Independent Chair of the Housing Management Advisory Board
Wards Affected:	All
Key or Non-Key Decision:	Non-key
Open or Part/Fully Exempt: <small>(If exempt, please highlight relevant paragraph of Part 1, Schedule 12A of 1972 Local Government Act)</small>	Open
List of Appendices:	Appendix 1 - Housing Management Advisory Board Terms of Reference (TOR) Appendix 2 - Housing Management Service – Improvement Plan
Background Papers:	None
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1.0 Executive Summary

- 1.1. The purpose of the report is to update the Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee on the work of the Housing Management Advisory Board.

2.0 Recommendation(s)

- 2.1 That the Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee note the progress being made by Housing Management to embed and positively engage with the Housing Management Advisory Board (The Board).

3.0 Detail

Contribution to Borough Plan Priorities & Strategic Context - The overview details the engagement of Housing Management Services with the Board and aligns with the Council's Borough Plan – Moving Brent Forward Together, particularly the priority to build thriving communities and enable residents to participate in Council decision-making.

This report also demonstrates how Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) are being embedded to strengthen resident engagement and empowerment, enabling residents to effectively scrutinise service performance.

3.0 Background

- 3.1 The Housing Management Board was established to provide scrutiny and oversight of the council's housing management services, with a particular focus on implementing the Tenant and Leaseholder Engagement Strategy. It is involved in reviewing community engagement methods and ensuring the council is responsive to the needs of its tenants and leaseholders.
- 3.2 The Board acts as a critical friend to the service, ensuring compliance with the regulatory framework set out by the Regulator of Social Housing. It also serves as an integral governance mechanism in the development and review of service policies. A key focus of the Board's role is to hold the service accountable for ensuring effective and meaningful resident engagement throughout these processes.
- 3.3 The Board comprises an independent Chair, three independent members, three Council tenant members, two Councillor representatives (including the portfolio holder for Housing), and three staff representatives.
- 3.4 Staff representatives were appointed by mutual agreement between the Corporate Director of Residents and Housing Services and the Director of Housing Services. The Council tenant and independent members were appointed following an open application and recruitment process to ensure transparency and fairness in selection.
- 3.5 The Terms of Reference for the Housing Management Advisory Board can be found in Appendix 1.

4.0 Board Activities

- 4.1 To date, four board meetings have been held, with the inaugural meeting taking place on 23 April 2025, during which the Terms of Reference and Code of Conduct were reviewed and endorsed.
- 4.2 An overview of the Housing Management Service, including its structure, remit, key challenges, and recent achievements was provided. The Board was also

advised that the Council had self-referred to the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) because of concerns about compliance-related remedial actions and agreed to prioritise resident engagement, compliance, repairs, voids and rent collection, complaints, and compensation.

- 4.3 The second meeting, held on 26 June 2025, commenced with an estate inspection that enabled Board members to assess conditions on-site, engage with residents, and discuss key operational and service delivery issues.
- 4.4 During the inspection a range of issues were observed, including fire safety, communal disrepair, fly-tipping, abandoned vehicles, and security. Members also raised questions regarding monitoring of caretaking and cleaning services, building safety, CCTV functionality, and the future use of the underground car park.
- 4.5 The visit provided valuable insight into estate management, strengthening Board Members' understanding of repairs, compliance, and resident engagement in practice.
- 4.6 The Board meeting on 28 August 2025 was used to focused on service improvement, resident communication, and responsiveness to maintenance and environmental issues, based on feedback from the estate inspection undertaken on 26 June. An update was provided on the compliance and building safety self-referral to the RSH, with progress reporting agreed as a standing agenda item for meetings going forward.
- 4.7 Members also requested for information on caretaker patch sizes, and details of how complaints guidance / reporting is being incorporated into resident communications and expressed an interest in scheduling future estate walkabouts.
- 4.8 Following review of the Housing Management Improvement Plan (attached), an update on the new internal governance structure, staffing levels and turnover was requested for the next meeting, and it was agreed that more detailed performance indicators should be presented going forward to enhance oversight and monitoring.
- 4.9 Agenda planning is undertaken collaboratively with the Chair of the Board. At the meeting on 22 October 2025, the Board received information on Housing Management Services' performance across key areas, including plans for improvement where standards had not been met. The agenda covered the following items:
 - **Self-referral update** - Key points included: monthly liaison with the Regulator, commissioning of Caldiston Ltd for independent oversight and a forensic audit across all compliance workstreams, and the development of a detailed Improvement Action Plan with responsibilities, timelines, and priority ratings. Updates were provided on gas and fire risk assessment (FRA) programmes, water and asbestos assessments, and ongoing resident engagement. Recruitment to strengthen compliance

and safety teams was also highlighted, including new appointments in compliance, electrical management, and voids management.

- **Housing and Tenant Satisfaction Improvement Programme** - covering the new internal governance structure, HMAB's role in providing oversight and challenge, updated improvement plan progress, programme design principles, and objectives across workstreams and governance boards.
- **Performance data** - focusing on safety and quality, transparency and accountability, neighbourhood and community, tenancy, rent, and staff competency and conduct.
- **Overview of the Housing Contact Centre and Out of Hours Service** – including service structure, delivery, current performance, call volumes, challenges, contract management, and its contribution to Housing Management

The Housing Management Improvement Advisor attended the meeting as an observer and commended the agenda and discussions, noting they demonstrated transparency and a clear commitment to delivering positive outcomes – the type of evidence a Regulator would expect to see during inspection.

The Board meets bi-monthly in person at the Civic Centre, with the next meeting scheduled for 17 December 2025. Future meetings will include further scrutiny of key issues, such as the financial position.

To date, Board members have completed two training courses delivered by the Chartered Institute of Housing: "Effective Governance" and "Regulatory Standard Update", enhancing their knowledge of best practice in governance and regulatory compliance, to assist in strengthening their ability to provide informed oversight and challenge.

5.0 Engagement with residents and key stakeholders

- 5.1 Work is also underway with the Board to develop a dedicated webpage, providing details of the Board's purpose, membership profiles, and information on how residents can engage directly with the Board. The webpage will also serve as a platform for sharing updates on service delivery and performance standards.

6.0 Financial Considerations

- 6.1 N/A - However, Council tenant and independent Board members are remunerated in line with the Housing Engagement Incentives and Rewards Policy. They are also able to claim reasonable expenses, which required them to attend at least 50% of the Board meetings over a six-month period.

7.0 Legal Considerations

7.1 N/A

8.0 Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Considerations

8.1 The Board is required to operate in accordance with the Council's Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) policy, ensuring broad and representative participation in its membership and decision-making processes.

9.0 Climate Change and Environmental Considerations

9.1 The Board are responsible for holding Housing Management Services to account for service delivery, including those which fall under the Council's Climate Action strategy.

10.0 Human Resources/Property Considerations (if appropriate)

10.1 N/A – although the Board are required to review its operation, membership, terms of reference and code of conduct on an annual basis

11.0 Communication Considerations

11.1 N/A

Report sign off:

Thomas Cattermole

Corporate Director of Residents and Housing Services