

Housing Ombudsman Annual Report – Key Observations

The Lead Member, Director, and Assistant Director of Housing Services have expressed their satisfaction with the Housing Ombudsman Annual Report 2024–2025, recognising it as a comprehensive and transparent reflection of the Council’s progress in complaint handling and service improvement. The report highlights several key strengths:

Clear Evidence of Progress: The report demonstrates significant strides in aligning with the Housing Ombudsman’s Complaint Handling Code, particularly through the centralisation of the complaints function and the introduction of structured service improvement initiatives.

Strong Performance Metrics: Leadership welcomed the marked reduction in Stage 1 and Stage 2 complaint volumes, improved response times, and the Council’s 100% compliance rate with Ombudsman orders—clear indicators of a more responsive and resident-focused service.

Commitment to Learning and Transparency: The inclusion of root cause analysis, deep dive reviews, and the use of Power BI for data insights is a positive proactive approach to continuous improvement and accountability.

Resident-Centric Approach: The introduction of post-resolution feedback surveys and the removal of the term “vexatious” in favour of “unacceptable behaviour” were seen as positive steps toward a more inclusive and empathetic complaints culture.

Forward-Looking Strategy: The clear articulation of next steps for 2025/2026, including training plans, policy updates, and the establishment of a Complaints Board to oversee ongoing improvements.

Policy Alignment with the Ombudsman Code: The review and agreed publication at Cabinet of the updated Complaints Policy and Procedure, which reflects a clear commitment to aligning with the Housing Ombudsman’s Code. The removal of outdated terminology, the temporary withdrawal of the Goodwill Gesture Policy for review, and the emphasis on fair and consistent remedies demonstrate a thoughtful and resident-focused approach to policy reform.

Overall, the report has been well received as a strong reflection of the Council’s commitment to service excellence, learning from complaints, and delivering better outcomes for residents.