

Climate Change, Housing and Communities Scrutiny Panel response to City Housing Complaints Performance and Improvement Report 2023-24

The Councillors on the Climate Change Housing and Communities Scrutiny Panel were given a presentation and a copy of the annual report to scrutinise at a meeting on 19 September 2024.

A key responsibility of the Scrutiny Panel is to be assured of the provision of quality housing services provided by the housing management agents on behalf of the City of Wolverhampton Council.

A report on the number and nature of complaints about housing related services is an important aspect of this because it provides Councillors with valuable insight into how tenants feel about their housing and the services provided.

The Scrutiny Panel took the opportunity to take a closer look at the complaints process to ensure that tenants experience a positive, open and transparent approach to complaint handling; that tenants are given fair and equal access to housing services and the complaints process; and that the **tenants' voice** is at the heart of shaping the delivery of services.

The Scrutiny Panel were very positive about the response to findings and the commitment by the housing management agents to improving the process for handling and responding to complaints as detailed in the report.

The evidence provided by this report suggests that the numbers of complaints relative to the number of properties under management are low. However, in comparison, Councillors report that they receive a disproportionately high number of housing related enquiries directly from tenants, whilst tenant perception and satisfaction of the complaints process is low.

The Scrutiny Panel recommend that further work is done to better understand how data regarding tenant complaints made directly to Councillors is captured. This will ensure that future annual report findings give a better reflection of the experiences of Councillors in respect of the number of complaints and enquiries they receive.

The Scrutiny Panel want to be confident that all expressions of dissatisfaction, whether made directly to the housing managing agent or to a Councillor, are properly captured and recorded. Also, that there is clarity around the difference between a 'complaint' and a 'service request', and that there is a consistent approach to recording the different types of complaints across each of the Council's housing managing agents.

The Scrutiny Panel also wanted both the complaints process and the annual report to be promoted and presented in ways that meets the needs and preferences of different communities across the City.

The Scrutiny Panel wanted a further analysis of the 'other' category in respect of types of complaints made to Wolverhampton Homes and included in a future annual report.

The Scrutiny Panel endorse the areas highlighted for improving the tenant experience of the service and the planned actions in response to the annual report findings. The Scrutiny Panel support the plans aimed at improving both tenant awareness of the complaints process and how to access the complaints process.

The Scrutiny Panel agreed to add the report to the future work programme agenda and to continue to monitor progress.

Signed:

Councillor Barbara McGarrity QN

Chair, Climate Change, Housing and Communities
Scrutiny Panel

27 September 2024



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WOLVERHAMPTON
COUNCIL