

Date: 23rd September 2026

Subject: **Governing Body Response to 2025-26 Annual Complaints & Service Improvement Report and supporting self-assessment against the Housing Ombudsman Code.**

Summary:

This document sets out the response by the Governing Body, the council's Corporate Governance Board (CGB) and Member Responsible for Complaints (MRC), the Cabinet Member for Resident Engagement and Accountability, to the Annual Complaints & Service Improvement Report covering the 2025-26 financial year and the supporting self-assessment form against the Housing Ombudsman Code.

Response Statement:

The 2025-26 Annual Complaints & Service Improvement Report sets out the council's complaint handling performance, complaint volumes, Ombudsman activity and learning identified during the financial year. The Corporate Governance Board and the Member Responsible for Complaints have considered the report and recognise it as a true and accurate reflection of the council's complaint handling activity, the increase in complaint demand during the year and the service improvement actions identified from complaints. Overall complaint volumes increased in 2025-26 compared with the previous year. The report identifies Parking, Benefits, Corporate Debt and Housing Strategy & Options as key contributors to the increase, while Housing Landlord Service recorded fewer Stage 1 complaints but a higher level of Stage 2 escalation.

The Governing Body notes the areas of learning and improvement set out in the report, including actions relating to communication with customers, complaint response quality, contractor performance monitoring, case management, staff training, record keeping, process controls and customer care. These actions demonstrate the council's continued commitment to using complaints as a source of learning and to strengthening services for residents.

The Board and MRC also note the Ombudsman determinations published during 2025-26 and the actions identified to support continuous improvement. Where complaints were upheld or learning was identified, the council has taken or will take proportionate action to address the issues raised and reduce the likelihood of recurrence.

The supporting self-assessment form undertaken against the Housing Ombudsman Code has also been reviewed by both the Corporate Governance Board and the Member Responsible for Complaints. The Governing Body acknowledges the council's position against the Code and the importance of maintaining compliance through regular review of policy, practice and service learning.

The 2025-26 Annual Complaints & Service Improvement Report and supporting self assessment has also been reported for consideration by the Council’s Cabinet on 2nd September 2026 (Report ref: C/26/28).

Signatures:

<i>Name: Ewan Green</i>	<i>Name: Cllr Gary Fuller</i>
<i>Title: Director – Strategy and Partnerships (Corporate Governance Board)</i>	<i>Title: Cabinet Member for Resident Engagement and Accountability (Member Responsible for Complaints)</i>