



**Halton**  
Housing

# Board Meeting Summary



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## **Halton Housing Board Meeting Summary – 26th March 2025**

### **Awaabs Law**

Awaab's Law was introduced in July 2023 as part of the Social Housing (Regulation) Act, following the tragic death of Awaab Ishak. The government has confirmed the law will be implemented in a phased approach from October 2025.

Initially, social landlords will be required to address damp and mould hazards that present a significant risk of harm to tenants within fixed timescales. From the same point in time, we will also have to address all emergency repairs, (whether they relate to damp and mould or not), as soon as possible and within no longer than 24 hours.

During 2026 and 2027, the law will be expanded to include a wider range of hazards beyond damp and mould.

In response we have:

- Increased resources to focus specifically on meeting the new law.
- Updated our damp and mould policy.
- Delivered refresher training to raise awareness across our operational teams on how to identify and report damp and mould.
- Reviewed communications on our website regarding how customers can report damp and mould.

We will continue to monitor the remaining phases of implementation. Once the detail has been confirmed, we will review our policies, procedures, and resource provision accordingly.

### **Complaints Handling**

The Housing Ombudsman Service (HOS) has reported a 100% increase in the number of case determinations for social housing residents in its 2023/24 annual report. The top three areas for complaints being repairs, complaint handling and tenant behaviour.

The increase in determinations is, in part, due to the new HOS Complaint Handling Code becoming embedded across the sector, and the consequential improvement in access to complaint procedures for customers. More decisions are also being upheld, with a maladministration rate for the year of 73%.

The maladministration rate for HH last year was 67% (with three cases), slightly below the sector average. A full update on the number of cases for 2024/25 will be provided in the Quarter 4 Customer Report.

We continue to strengthen our approach to how we manage complaints. During 2024/25 we have:

- Embedded the HOS Complaint Handling Code into our operations and have developed a new complaint handling procedure.

- Created a new centralised Complaint Handling Team, to provide greater consistency of complaint handling and to ensure lessons are learned and acted upon
- Developed a comprehensive annual customer facing report on our complaint's performance, which is published on our website.
- Embedded the use of data and insight to identify and address the root causes of complaints through our 'Listen, Learn, Act' Framework.
- Developed a range of protocols and reports to ensure the Member Responsible for Complaints (MRC), is kept informed on all aspects of our complaint's performance.

During 2025/26, we will review how we communicate with our customers and a key part of that will focus on how we communicate on complaints. We also plan to review our training offer for colleagues who work with customers, and specifically those who work on complaints.

### **Corporate Plan – Our Future Focus 2025-28**

Following extensive consultation and engagement with customers, colleagues and stakeholders Board approved the new corporate plan, "Our Future Focus 2025-28".

The plan is to be launched at an event for colleagues on 3rd April 2025 after which it will be made publicly available.

### **Budget 2025/26**

Board approved the budget and key performance measures for 2025/26. The budget satisfies our financial requirements for the next financial year and includes £9m investment in existing homes and £16.2m in the development of new homes.

### **New Scheme Approval**

Board approved a new scheme in Widnes that will provide three shared ownership homes. This is an exciting opportunity and demonstrates our continued commitment to building much needed new homes.

### **Other Items**

Board received an update on devolution and an update on how the review of customer engagement is progressing. It also approved the assets & liabilities register and a resolution to charge unallocated homes.