

REGULATORY UPDATE, FEBRUARY 2025

Background: Regulatory Judgement and Improvement Areas

Melton Borough Council was inspected by the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) in 2024. The Regulatory Judgement was published in August 2024. The summary from the regulatory judgement stated that:

From the evidence and assurance gained during the inspection, we have concluded that there are some weaknesses in Melton BC delivering the outcomes of the consumer standards and improvement is needed, specifically in relation to outcomes in our Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard. Based on this assessment, we have concluded a C2 grade for Melton BC.

The RSH found that there were five main areas where the Council needed to improve outcomes for tenants:

1. Turn up the volume on tenant voice.
2. Improve data held on tenants so that we can shape services to suit our demographic and show outcomes for them.
3. Increase the visibility of performance information (compliance / complaints)
4. Strengthen complaints reporting and monitoring.
5. Improve monitoring and reporting of ASB to show performance and trends

Progress Update: Approach and Format

Updates on each of these areas of the regulatory framework are outlined in this briefing note. They are split into the following headings, which have been discussed with our Landlord Assurance Board and tenant representatives:

1. Our commitments to tenants (outcomes for tenants)
2. Strategic / organisational aims
3. Actions completed
4. Evidence of impact (so far)
5. Next steps / plans for the future

Progress Update

Regulatory Improvement Area(s): Turn up the volume of tenant voice	
Our Commitment to Tenants (Outcomes for Tenants):	
<p>“Tenants’ voices will be heard”</p> <p>“Tenants will be given an enhanced opportunity to engage on service improvement and scrutinise services”</p>	
Strategic / Organisational Aims:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To ensure that policies, decisions, changes and service delivery arrangements are influenced by tenants. • To ensure that tenants have access to the right information at the right time and have opportunities to scrutinise our performance and service delivery. • An increased percentage of tenants feel that we listen to their views and act upon them. 	
Actions Completed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TPAS are reviewing our current arrangements. • Tenant involvement on the Landlord Assurance Board – successful and impactful

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have created a proactive engagement plan for the year. • Engagement with tenants is now built into standard decision-making templates • Reset of Your Voice, Your Choice – co-designed with tenants, terms of reference designed with tenants, relaunched March 2025
<p>Evidence of Impact</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-designed arrangements for tenant engagement group: Your Voice, Your Choice • Process for feedback loop between Your Voice, Your Choice and Landlord Assurance Board via tenant board members • Tenant involvement on the Landlord Assurance Board is changing the relationship between tenant and landlord, increasing tenant voice in holding us to account and has led to tenant led work being progressed – key example, code of conduct for contractors as suggested by tenants is being co-designed with tenants • Feedback from tenant reps on Landlord Assurance Board: <i>“It used to feel like them and us, but now it feels like we are a collective”</i> <i>“Informative, eye opening, it’s good to know how the council works”</i> <i>“It has created a broader group to have oversight into housing matters”</i> <i>“Good to pass on our opinions and feelings”</i>
<p>Next Steps / Plans for the future</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your Voice, Your Choice to be launched in March. • Following discussion at the last LAB we are now working with engaged tenants to create a code of conduct for staff and contractors. • Engage with tenants via events planned over next twelve months, seeking their views on the services that we provide. • Conclude TPAS review and enhance services based on their feedback, together with a review of the requirements for accreditation.

Regulatory Improvement Area(s): Knowing our Tenants (improve data held on tenants so that we can shape services to suit our demographic and show outcomes for them)	
Our Commitment to Tenants (Outcomes for Tenants):	
“Services will be designed to suit our tenants own unique, diverse needs”	
“Communication with tenants will be meaningful, effective and relevant to tenants’ contact preferences”	
Strategic / Organisational Aims:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To ensure that policies, decisions, changes and service delivery arrangements are shaped by our tenant demographic and individual needs. • To strengthen our assessment of equality and diversity impacts based on a deeper understanding of our tenants’ needs and protected characteristics. • To ensure we have confidence that communication is reaching tenants more effectively. • To see a positive improvement in tenant satisfaction around communication with us as a landlord (keeping tenants informed). 	
Actions Completed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tenant data project – we now know what data we would like to collect and how it will enhance our approach. • We are in the process of designing a computer system to store the data and keep it up to date. • Customer journey principles agreed for the whole council • Progress report to project management board (Helping People Board) • Assessed 23/24 TSM outcomes and mapped key improvements – informing our work now • Next TSM survey underway, with plans for more frequent surveys in place
Evidence of Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None at this stage
Next Steps / Plans for the future	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our next step is to start to map out the processes that we will use to collect data and keep it up to date. • System configuration to ensure we can store and use the data. • Collect data to enable profiling and communication based on preferences. • Review TSM outcomes and develop action plan to improve where needed

<p>Regulatory Improvement Area(s): Improving Transparency of (and access to) Performance Information (increase the visibility of performance information (compliance / complaints) and strengthen complaints reporting and monitoring)</p>	
<p>Our Commitment to Tenants (Outcomes for Tenants):</p> <p>“Tenants will have access to clear and understandable information at the right time to know how we are performing and to be able to hold us to account”</p> <p>“Tenants will have clear and easy ways to ask questions about how we are performing or raise concerns”</p>	
<p>Strategic / Organisational Aims:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To ensure that tenants understand how we are performing • To demonstrate good practice in line with the Housing Ombudsman Complaints Handling Code • To improve tenant understanding and satisfaction of the safety of their homes and the quality of services we provide • To have multiple and relevant ways in which to share information with tenants including for those without digital access (note: added following tenant feedback at Landlord Assurance Board) 	
<p>Actions Completed</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have now improved the way we record (and categorise) complaints data so we can report on more areas in a more meaningful way • Areas of health and safety compliance report (monthly dashboard) have been updated to improve transparency and clarity (smoke and CO detection, asbestos) • Updates and discussion at Landlord Assurance Board meetings • Quarterly performance information on the website (note: tenant feedback at LAB meeting very positive about this format and approach) • Landlord health and safety audit 24/25 summary on the website • Annual report 23/24 published / shared with tenants • Development of next tenant newsletter in progress
<p>Evidence of Impact</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive feedback from tenant reps at Landlord Assurance Board on increased access to / ease of reading performance information • Tenant feedback and advice on how best to share information with tenants is now shaping future plans (suggestions include leaflets and flyers, noticeboards, emails, letters, website promotion)

<p>Next Steps / Plans for the future</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will introduce a new complaints performance report in April to cover the last quarter of 24/25 • Review of the compliance report is underway to make it simpler • We will introduce a new complaints management IT system later this year • We will align LAB meetings with performance reporting cycles to ensure data is up to date
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<p>Regulatory Improvement Area(s): ASB Case Management System and Reporting</p>	
<p>Our Commitment to Tenants (Outcomes for Tenants):</p>	
<p>“Tenants will have clear and consistently applied policy and case management arrangements”</p>	
<p>“Tenants will have a clear understanding of how to report ASB and how their cases will be managed, including taking an incremental approach”</p>	
<p>“Tenants will have ways to feedback on their satisfaction with the way their case was managed and resolved”</p>	
<p>“Tenants will have access to clear and understandable information at the right time to know how are performing and to able to hold us to account”</p>	
<p>Strategic / Organisational Aims:</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To ensure we have confidence and can evidence that our policy is being consistently applied to all ASB cases • To ensure we can review performance around ASB, including real time satisfaction, to help shape future improvements and service delivery • Improved tenant satisfaction with our handling of ASB cases • Coherent and robust partnership approach to case management across housing and safer communities teams and with partners (including police) • Ability to myth bust and to have clear and coherent communication methods for information about ASB and Envirocrime 	

Actions Completed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updates and discussion at Landlord Assurance Board meetings – clear that ongoing work is needed on communication and tenant awareness on process and outcomes • Focused agenda item at Your Voice, Your Choice meetings (ASB and incremental approach) • Developed tenant satisfaction survey to be used as part of case management process • Important project change agreed – moving from NEC system to ECINS case management system for ASB (system for the whole of Leicestershire – councils and police) to improve case management and reporting. Note that key elements are built into the new system including risk assessment, letters and actions / tasking for officers. On track to launch April 2025. • Quarterly performance information on the website includes ASB information • ‘How to report ASB’ information on website, social media, printed in communal areas • Significant case management outcome to address a county line (closure orders for multiple properties) safeguarding communities and vulnerable victims and leading to positive tenant feedback and a unanimous motion at full council in recognition of significant work of staff, partners and communities. • Debrief following closure orders leading to implementation of further measures to safeguard staff, train staff and contractors, actions to further enhance collaboration whilst closure orders being carried out and agreement to develop a protocol for sensitive re-lets on these properties.
Evidence of Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant case management outcome to address a county line (closure of multiple properties) leading to positive tenant feedback <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“Thank you so much. I can let my granddaughter out to play again”</i> • <i>“Thank you, God, it is so nice not to have to listen to them arguing about drugs whilst drunk”</i> • <i>“You have already made an impact”</i> • Unanimously supported motion at full council in recognition of significant work of staff, partners and communities (motions on notice, item 8)
Next Steps / Plans for the future	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will be moving towards using the same computer system for ASB as our other partners across Leicestershire. This will help us to share information with others and will strengthen our joint working with our Safer Communities Team. • The new system will include the ability to show how we are performing. As part of this we are also launching a resident satisfaction survey for ASB cases. • Training for teams and contractors on county lines and cuckooing

Overview of Governance, Regulatory Assurance and Oversight:

- Landlord Health and Safety 24/25 Audit – reported to Audit and Standards Committee Jan 2025 (substantial assurance)
- Regulatory update to Senior Leadership Team (6 month progress review) 11th February 2025
- Proposals for a revised tenancy services staffing structure to maximise income recovery, regularise temporary arrangements and accelerate project delivery (approved by SLT 11th February 2025) and budget approved by Council 13th February 2025
- Income performance quarterly updates to Senior Leadership Team and monthly updates to Director
- Performance, risk and complaints reporting to Cabinet – quarterly cycle
- Portfolio Holder meetings – standing agenda item (monthly)
- Housing Leadership Team – standing agenda item (six weekly)
- Monthly updates on Health and Safety compliance – dashboards reported to Director, Portfolio Holder and shared in members bulletins each month
- Landlord Assurance Board – last meeting 13th February 2025
- Upcoming: Scrutiny Committee 20th March 2025
 - Regulatory Assurance Update (including TSM's)
 - Annual Report of the Landlord Assurance Board