

To: Cabinet

Date: 9 April 2025

Report/Comments of: Scrutiny Committee

Title: Scrutiny feedback to Cabinet – Landlord Assurance Board Annual Report 2024/25

<b>SUMMARY OF REPORT CONSIDERED</b>	
<b>Report Title:</b>	Landlord Assurance Board Annual Report 2024/25
<b>Purpose/Description of Report:</b>	The report represents a review of the first year of the board and provides an update on progress and impact
<b>Key Decision:</b>	No
<b>Scrutiny Lead Member:</b>	Cllr M Brown, Scrutiny Committee Chairman
<b>Relevant Portfolio Holder:</b>	Cllr Allnatt, Portfolio Holder for Housing, Leisure and Landlord Services

## **1. Introduction and Overview**

The Scrutiny Committee met on 20 March 2025 to consider a report on the Landlord Assurance Board Annual Report 2024/25.

The Landlord Assurance Board was implemented in April 2024. It provides an opportunity for collective ownership of one of the Council's most significant areas of responsibility. It does not replace any existing structures, scrutiny or decision-making arrangements; however, it provides a single focus for political and professional leaders and tenants to work as a partnership of equals and to consider housing matters in one place; ensuring there is collective focus and grip on housing, regulatory responsibilities, and tenant voice.

## **2. Summary of Feedback/Recommendations for Cabinet Consideration**

- In questioning the tenant representatives, the Committee were informed that what the Council needs to do in order to encourage more tenants to get involved is to keep doing what it is currently doing, go out to communities and speak to people. Listen to tenants and that also included contractors for the Council.

- Members were also informed that there needs to be more people in the your voice your choice group. It was noted that a lot of tenants don't know they have the opportunity to join. It was suggested that there needs to be incentives and tenants need to be asked what the barriers are for them to get involved.
- A comment was raised that tenants do not always feel believed and listened to and that culturally, Officers and contractors need to listen to tenants and to what they are saying. It was recognised that a change in this direction has been taking place already.
- A suggestion was made that the Council should have an open day for tenants. At the open day, tenants can feedback various issues affecting them including the upcoming benefits changes.
- The tenants commented that when repairs are happening the replacement product is sometimes of poorer quality and needs repairing sooner than expected. Officers need to be inspecting the work and ensure that issues like this are being brought up with contractors.
- The importance of the new Code of Conduct was raised. It was commented that tenants feel that the code assists them in receiving the best service possible and being treated with respect. It was explained that the Code of Conduct outlines the time frames for responses and repairs and sets expectations for both the tenants and the contractors.
- It was noted that planned maintenance is information that is known and can be shared with tenants. Including the timescales for urgent and non-urgent repairs.
- It was recognised that the Council needs to promote itself a bit better. There are a lot of complainers who are keyboard warriors and there are some people won't contact the Council and will only speak to people who they know. That is why the introduction of tenant representatives has been so important. From an Officer perspective, the voice and insight of the representative has been incredible.
- It was noted that as a landlord, the Council has legal obligations that a person owning their own house doesn't have in terms of health and safety. They may appear onerous to an observer but they are legal obligations that the Council has to adhere to.
- A concern was raised that the Council does not get in contact with tenants who don't get in contact with the Council. In response it was noted that Officers are introducing an annual contact with tenants, with a focus on the tenants who don't report repairs. It was recognised that there needs to be better data on tenants' preferences and needs.
- The comment was made that an issue that is raised at the Board meeting and then actioned is a key metric that Officers should be making a note of.

- A Member commented that essentially there are 1700 households and in order to engage with them, the best way is to go to them and not getting them to the Council. It was commented that if there is a resource issue then the resource needs to be provided as it would be a good use of time and resource to engage with tenants.
- The Committee thanked the tenant representative for their attendance at the meeting and their input.

**Written by: Scrutiny Committee Chairman in consultation with Members of the Scrutiny Committee**