

CABINET COMMITTEE: HOUSING

Wednesday, 23 July 2025

Attendance:

Councillors
Reach (Chairperson)

Becker
Cutler
Clear

Horrell
Power
White

[Recording of this meeting](#)

1. **APOLOGIES**

No apologies were received.

2. **DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS**

Councillor Horrell declared a personal (but not prejudicial) interest in respect of agenda items (should it be referred to) as her husband was a Trinity board member.

3. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Ian Tait and Lynda Vincent spoke during public participation and their comments are summarised under the relevant minutes below.

4. **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 3 FEBRUARY 2025**

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the previous meeting held 3 February 2025 be agreed as a correct record.

5. **CHAIRPERSON'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Councillor Reach reported that following his appointment in May as Cabinet Member for Good Homes; he had met with TACT Board, officers and some tenants and he was arranging visits to council homes across the district.

6. **NEW HOMES PROGRAMME UPDATE (PRESENTATION)**

The Service Lead – New Homes gave a presentation on the new homes programme which was available on the council's website [here](#).

The Service Lead, Councillor Reach, and other officers present responded to questions and comments raised by councillors on the presentation as follows:

- a) What were the main risks and headwinds that could affect the delivery of the forecast housing numbers?
- b) Clarification was sought as to why a five-unit exception site in Brighton was not included on the new homes distribution map.
- c) A breakdown of affordable housing by tenure type (e.g. social rent, affordable rent, and shared ownership) for both council and registered provider schemes be provided in future presentations to the committee.
- d) Referring to the Housing Development Strategy, a question was asked regarding action that could be taken based on the first preference data for housing need across the district.
- e) Clarification was sought on the typical length of an option agreement on land, such as that at Mayles Lane in Wickham.
- f) How could the council ensure that the size of homes being provided would meet the predicted future need for smaller households?
- g) When would councillors be able to comment on the Housing Development Strategy and would the committee have an opportunity to review?
- h) What consideration was given to land that had been gifted to the council for the purpose of housing development?
- i) An explanation was sought as to why the Ravenswood at Knowle scheme was not included in the report and when it might progress.
- j) A question was asked about how the updated strategy would address attracting necessary funding and working with other organisations, such as community land trusts, to deliver affordable homes.

Ian Tait spoke during public participation as summarised briefly below.

Questioned the progress on several housing schemes, including Dyson Drive, Woodman Close in Sparsholt, and Minden Way, highlighting the significant time and costs incurred with little apparent progress. He also inquired when the financial details for the King's Barton and Morgan's Yard schemes would be made public to improve transparency.

Mr Tait raised concerns about the lack of housing delivery within the South Downs National Park. He questioned how the council was working with the park authority to deliver affordable homes in that area and asked how schemes within the park, such as the one in Twyford, impacted the council's overall housing numbers?

Councillor Reach and the Service Lead responded. Councillor Reach advised that he would discuss housing delivery in the Park area with the council's representative. The Service Lead advised that the final business case for Woodman Close would be presented to Cabinet in October and that financial details for other schemes were not able to be released as were either not yet approved by Cabinet or were still in active legal negotiations. It was also confirmed that the council did assess development opportunities within the South Downs National Park but noted that the economic viability of smaller rural sites for the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) was often a challenge.

RESOLVED:

1. That the update regarding the new homes programme be noted.

2. That a breakdown of affordable housing by tenure type for both council and registered provider schemes be provided in future presentations to the committee

7. **RETROFIT PROGRAMME UPDATE (PRESENTATION)**

The Retrofit Manager gave a presentation on the retrofit programme which was available on the council's website [here](#).

The Retrofit Manager and other officers present responded to questions and comments raised by councillors on the presentation as follows:

- a) A question was asked about the Swedish cottages project, specifically how many tenants were affected and what the plan and timescale for resolution was.
- b) Clarification was sought on how other local authorities handled leasehold owners within blocks of flats undergoing retrofit works and what lessons could be learned from their experiences. There should be strategy that would work for a whole block of flats, effectively managing works for both council tenants and leaseholders.
- c) Further information was requested on how the retrofit strategy was being aligned with the incoming stock condition data and tenant profile data to ensure maximum efficiency.
- d) Ward councillors should be more proactively involved in tenant engagement to support officers and help reassure residents, particularly concerning more challenging projects.

RESOLVED:

That the update regarding the retrofit programme be noted.

8. **FEEDBACK FROM TACT BOARD MEETING HELD 11 JUNE 2025 (VERBAL UPDATE)**

Councillor Reach provided an update on the meeting of the TACT Board, as summarised below.

- a) There was positive feedback on the structure of the housing improvement workshops, which tenants considered worked well and provided a good opportunity to contribute.
- b) Areas for improvement were identified, including the quality of information on the Home Choice system, which needed to be enhanced.
- c) A need to increase the diversity of participants in workshops was highlighted, to ensure they were reflective of the communities served.
- d) The level of response to consultations could be improved and require new ideas to broaden engagement.
- e) It was suggested that an "at a glance" summary for long and complex policies would be helpful.
- f) Feedback on complaint handling indicated that this was good, and complaints should be viewed as opportunities to learn.

- g) The importance of celebrating successes, such as retrofit projects, was raised as a way to build tenant engagement and demand for improvements.
- h) It was noted that clear feedback loops between the TACT Board, Scrutiny, the Committee, and Cabinet were essential for effective governance.

Ian Tait spoke during public participation as summarised briefly below.

He stated that he had been unable to find any background papers for this agenda item on the council website and also queried whether the TACT board published agendas or minutes. He questioned the effectiveness of the new TACT Board structure, noting that he had only ever seen one non-councillor board member attend council housing meetings, despite board members receiving payment for their role. He also questioned whether it was best practice that an elected member act as chair of the TACT Board, suggesting the role should be held by an independent or tenant member to ensure impartiality. He felt that as a member of the public with a strong interest in housing, he was precluded from contributing. While he believed the TACT Board could be a powerful driver for improvements, he questioned whether the current structure was working effectively.

Councillor Reach responded to the comments made, including that the TACT Board was a relatively new body and he was confident that its operation was progressing positively, but that its effectiveness would remain under review.

RESOLVED:

That the update be noted.

9. **HOUSING REPAIRS, MAINTENANCE & DISABLED ADAPTATIONS POLICIES**

(CAB3512(H))

Councillor Reach introduced the report. The second recommendation was to make minor amendments to the Damp and Mould Policy to ensure compliance with forthcoming legislation, commonly known as Awaab's Law.

Corporate Head of Housing, provided a further introduction which included the following points:

- a) The policies were important to support the re-procurement of maintenance and compliance activities and as a business need to provide clear guidance for officers and a clear understanding of responsibilities between landlord and tenants.
- b) It was essential that tenants were involved in the development of all policies and procedures.
- c) The policies were designed to be compliant with laws and regulations, provide consistency and fairness, mitigate risk, and improve customer communication and satisfaction levels.
- d) The policies would be reviewed every two years to ensure they remained effective and that tenants were central to the work being carried out.

Councillor Reach added further points reflecting feedback from the TACT Board, which included:

- a) A need to ensure a “human touch” was applied to the policies, particularly the recharge policy, to avoid punishing vulnerable tenants who may struggle with maintenance for various reasons.
- b) Consideration should be given to how the policies could differentiate to reflect individual tenant circumstances and whether the council could refer tenants to other services for assistance.
- c) An emphasis was needed to ensure contractors and surveyors did not just follow a tick-box exercise but took into account the individual circumstances of the property and its residents.

Councillor Reach, the Strategic Director, Corporate Head of Housing and the Housing Project and Policy Manager then responded to questions and comments raised by councillors as summarised below:

- a) Whether the impact of the new policies would be reviewed by members after the first year and how this impact would be measured.
- b) A suggestion was put forward to involve tenants more in policy development through a standing group, similar to the previously successful 'Readers' Panel'.
- c) A question was asked about the Disabled Adaptations Policy and its application to tenants who were under-occupying their property, and what solutions were available for them.
- d) A query was raised about the success criteria for the policies, particularly concerning contractor competence, missed appointments, and the impact on tenants who had to take time off work.
- e) A suggestion was made to regularly publish performance data to reassure the public that the service was performing well and to demonstrate improvements.
- f) How did the adaptations policy address the needs of individuals with progressively deteriorating conditions and where future needs could be anticipated.
- g) Whether more could be done to develop and share both positive and negative case studies for learning and communication purposes.
- h) A question was asked regarding the availability of Occupational Therapists (OTs) through Hampshire County Council and the number of in-house OTs employed by the council.
- i) Clarification was sought on the definitions of ‘responsive repairs’ and ‘programmed repairs’.
- j) Confirmation was requested that the Disabled Adaptations Policy was comprehensive and covered a wide range of physical and mental health conditions.
- k) What were the consequences for contractors who breached the code of conduct.
- l) A query was raised about whether lagging cold water feed pipes had been considered as part of the Damp and Mould Policy.

- m) Clarification was sought on the criteria used to define 'untidy gardens' in the list of rechargeable repairs, as this was subjective in many cases.

Ian Tait and Lynda Vincent spoke during public participation as summarised briefly below.

Ian Tait

He supported the change in ethos within polices to ensure remained resident centric, i.e. 'with and for them', rather than 'to them'. He advised that TARA meetings were of positive value and were informative, especially as contractors attended. He suggested that systems, primarily regarding repairs, weren't currently well integrated. This was likely a technological issue of recording information on council systems and engaging its contractors correctly. Therefore, to achieve what the policies are aspiring to do, there may be some necessary practical changes to make.

Lynda Vincent

Queried whether the council's disabled access polices were being consistently and fairly applied to include access for members of the public to council scheme communal areas, including gardens.

Sought reassurance regarding policies regarding leaseholders using video doorbells and cameras that monitor and record activities in tenant resident and communal areas.

Secure cycle storage should, where possible, be provided in residential properties so to encourage greater use of cycles due to its various benefits.

Councillor Reach, the Strategic Director, Corporate Head of Housing and the Housing Project and Policy Manager responded to the comments made as summarised below:

- a) Use of technology would help to further improve how repairs were dealt with. A resident post repair satisfaction survey had also been recently launched, and this information would be fed back via contractor meetings.
- b) Adaptations and Aids budget were part of the HRA budget and only applied to council home communal areas for tenants and not for members of the public.
- c) Regarding video doorbells etc, it was incumbent on the owners to ensure that these were operated in compliance with the law. The Information Commissioner should be consulted regarding any complaint regarding their use.
- d) Council policies encourage walking and cycling wherever possible. Where unused spaces areas in residential spaces could be adapted for cycle storage, this could be investigated, along with broader investment to

this area. In addition, secure facilities were also installed at some destinations.

Following further debate of the report, Councillor Reach explained that performance exception data regarding the policies could be considered at the TACT Board and he would also discuss at his regular internal meetings as Cabinet member. Where possible, it was also noted that ward councillors be engaged where was appropriate to do so.

The Cabinet Committee agreed the following for the reasons set out above and outlined in the report.

RESOLVED:

1. That the following four Housing Repairs and Maintenance policies be approved and adopted:

- a) Disabled Adaptations Policy
- b) Housing Repairs and Maintenance Policy
- c) Housing Repairs Recharge Policy
- d) Managing Damp and Mould Policy

2. That authority be delegated to the Corporate Head of Housing, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Good Homes, to make any minor amendments to the damp and mould policy so it is compliant with legislation from October 2025.

10. **SOCIAL HOUSING REGULATION CONSUMER STANDARD IMPROVEMENT PLAN**

(CAB3511(H))

Councillor Reach and the Strategic Director introduced the report which included the following points:

- a) The report had been presented to other committees, including the TACT Board, where questions were raised regarding the priority of works, the budget, policy updates, the stock condition survey, and asbestos risk.
- b) Assurances were provided that the priority of works was based on independent advice and that information on the budget was included in the report.
- c) The TACT Board had requested regular updates from meetings with the social housing regulator and had suggested using social media to improve communication with tenants.
- d) Compliance training had been provided on 16 July 2025, and meetings with the social housing regulator indicated that the progress made was viewed as very positive.
- e) Further progress had been made since the report was written. For example, all fire risk assessments were completed, with only three high-risk remedial actions outstanding.

Councillor Reach, the Strategic Director and other relevant officers then responded to questions and comments raised by councillors as summarised below:

- a) A request was made for the term 'minor slippage' to be annotated with more commentary in future reports.
- b) A question was asked for an explanation on how to interpret the status of actions within the report, specifically concerning an item on fire safety (item 10), to understand if an action was complete or if it was progressing towards a future deadline.

Ian Tait spoke during public participation as summarised briefly below.

He expressed concern that the report was wordy and might not be easily understood by tenants, who were funding the associated administrative costs. He questioned the qualifications and experience of the TACT Board to provide effective oversight and scrutiny of compliance performance. He suggested that the report could be simplified to make it a more readable.

In response, Councillor Reach advised that the TACT Board were absolutely qualified for this purpose, and he reported that he had challenged it to advise him of any additional performance indicators that they should consider.

The Cabinet Committee agreed the following for the reasons set out above and outlined in the report.

RESOLVED:

- 1. That the progress made in delivering the housing improvement plan be noted.
- 2. That regular updates on plan implementation be received at future meetings of this committee.

11. **DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS (BOTH 10AM START):**

RESOLVED:

That the dates and times of future meetings be noted.

The meeting commenced at 10.00 am and concluded at 12.15 pm

Chairperson