

**Title: Leeds Housing Board review**

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**Meeting Date: 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2025**

## **1. Background**

- 1.1. The effectiveness of the Leeds Housing Board will be reviewed by the Regulator when they conduct their inspection. They will want to see how the Board operates and effective it is at holding Housing Leeds to account. The Council needs to create an environment where the Board and its members can thrive. Therefore, it is important that attendees have as much support as they require to be as effective as possible.
- 1.2. A review of the Leeds Housing Board was carried out between September and October 2024 to try to determine if there were any improvements that could be introduced to improve the robustness of the Board.
- 1.3. The Leeds Housing Board is a forum allowing for elected members and tenant representatives to scrutinise activity and challenge where appropriate.
- 1.4. This review was carried out around one year after the Board was established, a good natural point in its evolution to conduct a review.
- 1.5. The full report is attached at Appendix 1.

## **2. Main Points**

- 2.1. Elected members and tenant representatives were interviewed individually for their thoughts on the strengths of the Board, and how it could be strengthened and whether there could be more robust challenge around service delivery.
- 2.2. It was noted that Board attendees commented on the high quality of information presented to them by Council Officers, along with their openness to suggestions and requests for more detail on specific topics.
- 2.3. There was a significant amount of enthusiasm to improve the robustness of the Board and to improve how effective it is at challenging performance and holding service delivery teams to account.
- 2.4. Running concurrently to the Board review was a recruitment campaign managed by the Tenant Engagement Team. This aimed to attract interest in the two vacant tenant representative positions on the Board. As of December 2024, these two vacant positions had been filled.
- 2.5. Several practical and logistical proposals were put forward by interviewees to increase the effectiveness of the Board including:
  - Holding some meetings face to face rather than all being online
  - More support for tenant representatives who may be unfamiliar with the workings of Council Boards

- Re-issuing the terms of reference of the Board, to its members. This will remind them of its aims and objectives.

### **3. Proposed Changes to the Board - Discussion Points**

- 3.1. Following the Board review the following changes are proposed to the Operational Meetings of the Board:
- That of the four meetings per year, that two are held online and two are held in person. It is proposed that the timing of these meetings is spaced out equally during the year, after each quarter end to ensure that meetings are more aligned to reporting cycles.
  - That key points papers are presented briefly by officers, with discussion points identified which focus on more challenging issues. Board Members will be encouraged to read papers and to consider the discussion points before meetings and to participate in meetings.
  - That the Forward Plan is considered at each meeting, to identify future agenda items and to consider if some topics need to be considered in more depth in a small working group.
  - That a Complaints Sub-Group is established, chaired by the Deputy Member Responsible for Complaints and attended by Tenant Members (and any other Board Members wishing to be involved) to enable more detailed input on complaints, including trends analysis and lessons learnt.
- 3.2. It is proposed that the following changes are made to the Strategic Meetings and the way that oversight is provided of the delivery of the Housing Strategy:
- That a twice yearly report of progress is completed outlining progress and challenges in delivering Housing Strategy priorities, which is shared with Board Members along with other key stakeholders.
  - It is proposed that the Housing Strategy Board meetings in their current format do not continue and that instead an Annual Housing Strategy meeting is arranged with Leeds Housing Board Members and the city's stakeholders in the social and private rented housing sector to review progress overall with the Housing Strategy. It is proposed that this is then supplemented with periodic meetings with key stakeholders in response to particular challenges of Housing Strategy themes or issues which require a collaborative approach, e.g. in response to homelessness pressures.

### **4. Recommendations**

- 4.1. Members are requested to comment on the findings of the Review and proposed changes.