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## KIRKLEES COUNCIL

### GROWTH AND REGENERATION SCRUTINY PANEL

**Monday 22nd September 2025**

Present: Councillor Zarina Amin (Chair)  
Councillor Timothy Bamford  
Councillor Donna Bellamy  
Councillor Harry McCarthy

In attendance: Cllr Moses Crook, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member  
for Transport and Housing  
David Brook, Head of Repairs and Maintenance  
Lisa Ramsden, Head of Housing Management &  
Partnerships  
Phil Jones, Service Director, Homes and Neighbourhoods  
David Shepherd, Executive Director for Place

Apologies: Councillor Alison Munro  
Chris Friend (Co-Optee)

**9 Membership of the Panel**

Apologies were received from Chris Friend and Cllr Alison Munro.

**10 Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

**RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the meeting held on the 11 August 2025, be approved as a correct record.

**11 Declaration of Interests**

No interests were declared.

**12 Admission of the Public**

All agenda items were considered in public.

**13 Deputations/Petitions**

No deputations or petitions were received.

**14 Public Question Time**

In accordance with Council Procedure rule 11, Mr Andrew Wilson submitted written questions. The Chair agreed to provide a written response.

**15 Response to Awaab's Law**

Cllr Moses Crook, Portfolio Holder for Transport and Housing, introduced the agenda item, advising the Panel that the report outlines the council's preparedness for the implementation of Awaab's Law, which will come into force on the 27<sup>th</sup> October 2025.

The Panel was informed that the law is named after Awaab Ishak who sadly died in 2020, as a result of a failure to address issues with damp and mould in his home. It is right to both commemorate and hold landlords to account to make prompt and effective repairs in response to potentially serious hazards, and to make the response times statutory.

Kirklees Homes and Neighbourhoods have already established good practice and demand response in the area of damp, mould and condensation following the notice to improve by the Regulator of Social Housing, and well ahead of implementation of this law.

The backlog and persistent high numbers of damp, mould and condensation cases inherited when the landlord function came back inhouse in 2022, have been addressed. There is now a stable number of cases, well below the projected business as usual numbers and that has been the case since June 2025. Currently there are approximately 240 cases, and this has been achieved through a comprehensive programme of service redesign, investment in the service, workforce development and partnership with external contractors.

There is confidence that demand can be managed, including projected seasonal increases while continuing to remain compliant with the specifications in Awaab's Law, from now and as it becomes statutory. The approach to damp, mould and condensation is extremely robust, as issues are surveyed, repaired and re-surveyed at three- and six-months post repair or post treatment to ensure the issue is fully resolved and not recurring.

There is sufficient capacity to meet the anticipated increase in demand during the annual cold season, with additional contingency measures in place to address any unexpected rise in cases. Furthermore, a comprehensive stock condition survey of all housing is currently underway, which may identify previously unreported issues. Additional capacity has been allocated to address any such findings as they arise.

Awaab's Law also has implications for electrical safety, and there is already compliance with this stipulation and will continue to plan ahead to be ready for other areas of compliance as they are added to the framework. The commitment to tenants go beyond compliance and will continue the journey of improvement to exceed the statutory timeframes and standards, putting the safety and welfare of tenants as the highest priority.

In response to the information presented, the Panel asked a number of questions and made comments including some of the following:

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- In respect of properties where it is difficult to find the reason for the damp and mould, whether the cause is from the tenant or some other reason. How many properties are there and what is the process to address that?
- Managing to reduce the backlog and get to a business-as-usual position, particularly before the August deadline is very impressive and it is important to thank officers for that. The upskilling of staff is also impressive. Engagement with resident has shaped the entire process and that should be recognised.
- The report mentions the use of external contractors to deal with some of the cases, particularly if there is more than anticipated or to increase demand. Are there any plans to reduce the reliance on external contractors in the future?
- In respect of other social landlords, for example housing associations, is there anything that the council can do to help partners in those situations?
- With regard to the lifestyle issue, if homes are to be ventilated for example in winter by opening windows to prevent condensation, it is a difficult balance between keeping the home warm and ventilating it.

### **RESOLVED:**

That the Cabinet Member and officers be thanked for providing an update on the Council's response to Awaabs Law.

- 16 Update of the Housing Management & Partnerships Service Redesign**  
Cllr Moses Crook, introduced the agenda item, advising the Panel that the report provides an update on the ongoing redesign of the Kirklees Homes and Neighbourhoods Housing Management and Partnership Service, including progress, key changes and improvements in tenant experience.

The Panel was informed that this is the service responsible for the delivery of landlord functions to tenants. Over recent years there has been a narrowing of the range of service provision from housing service, as well as a move towards recovery of costs to comply with regulations from the Regulator of Social Housing, with respect to what can be provided as a landlord.

This has clearly been a process which has required clear communication with tenants, as well as a sensitive and supportive transition. Through this, it has been important to define a trusting relationship with tenants, one where there is a need to be clear at every level of the service, on what can and what cannot be provided as a landlord. "It is important to clearly state what support or services can be provided, including details of how and when these will be delivered, and to ensure that all commitments made are fulfilled.

The Regulator of Social Housing has provided the four consumer standards, and it is necessary to ensure compliance against these standards. There are 22 Tenant Satisfaction Measures used to assess performance, including twelve tenant perception measures (TSM) that help to identify when the service is not being provided to tenants as expected.

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These measures have shown a decrease in satisfaction in the year 24/25 compared to the previous reporting period in 23/24. The service redesign is a response to this unacceptable trend. Referring to an appendix in the report the panel was informed that the midyear analysis shows an increase in every one of the 12 TSMs, the tenant perception part.

Performance is not yet at the desired level; however, the actions taken to date have reversed the previous downward trend. Early signs of recovery are now evident, with increasing confidence and satisfaction being reported by tenants.

Phil Jones, Service Director for Homes and Neighbourhood informed the Panel that the report highlights three key issues.

- 1) To improve, and increase visibility within neighbourhoods, recognising that this is important to tenants.
- 2) Work is underway to review and introduce measures addressing anti-social behaviour, which is recognised as a key issue affecting tenants. The establishment of a team directly addresses this concern and provides an immediate response to incidents as they arise.
- 3) A positive development to highlight is the approach to neighbourhood plans and neighbourhood planning. This provides communities with a clear understanding of intended actions and creates opportunities for accountability, enabling communities to agree on actions and to challenge when commitments are not being met.

In response to the information presented, the Panel asked a number of questions and made comments including some of the following:

- It is positive that the council is looking at anti-social behaviour. If the anti-social behaviour is coming from a council tenant and causing problems with neighbours. How would you deal with that and if they are moved, it feels like the problem is being moved elsewhere. What is the process?
- How much powers does the council have if the anti-social behaviour is occurring between a council tenant and a homeowner?
- The tenant satisfaction measures include twelve that are assessed through a perception survey. Is there any indication of the direction of travel for the remaining ten measures?
- Do housing officers have a case management tool? It appears that from the previous report referring to damp, mould and condensation, there is one, however section 3.2 of this report refers to the absence of an effective IT reporting system and people are expected to manage that caseload on their own.
- In respect of the neighbourhood plans, what is the geography? Is it across the district, or is it specific estates or a different area?

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### **RESOLVED:**

That the Cabinet Member and officers be thanked for providing an update on the Housing Management & Partnership Service Redesign.