

Homes PDG Chair's Annual Report

Spring 2025

My personal thanks to everyone who has attended and/or supported this group during the past year. We have achieved a great deal, not just in the completion of quite so many policies, but also with some notable achievements for our tenants.

MDH has almost 3000 homes on its current list, and approximately the same number of people applying for a home of their own. There are bold intentions to increase our housing stock, and with that goes the desire to see more people safely settled in a home of their own, and during the next 12 months.

Tenant security and happiness is at the forefront of our minds, and most of the policies seek to support and to help this. Similarly, we hope to welcome some tenant representatives onto this group in the very near future, and our downsizing working group has developed some innovative ideas to encourage families to at least consider vacating a home that is now too big for their needs, in order to facilitate another big family having the necessary space for their lives.

Devon's Housing Commission Report (Lord Best and Exeter University) was released in 2024, and raised multiple issues and opportunities. We are fortunate that MDDC has been so very forward thinking in its work with MHD. Our Labour Government has set out its intentions regarding both Social and Affordable housing stock, and its views on Right to Buy are becoming clearer – again we are fortunate that MDDC and MDH were already embarked upon appropriate plans and timescales.

MDH has a draft budget in place that covers 2022-2026, and which we believe is entirely manageable. Our Performance Dashboard data is published quarterly, and is becoming more useful as its lifetime extends. Our Communications Team has been doing an excellent job of offering help, support and advice to our tenants. Our Neighbourhood Officers do a magnificent job of knowing each and every tenant, and in offering help and support where they deem this to be necessary.

MDH has won a wide range of awards and commendations for the work that is being done despite not having a full complement of appropriately trained staff in all areas of its work. We hope to put that right in this next year, and to begin to offer a wider range of apprenticeships also.

I must also mention the Housing Options Team, and the wider Public Health Team also. They have been doing a really great job regarding the prevention of homelessness in Mid Devon by increasing the stock of dedicated temporary accommodation that can be used, and is owned, by Mid Devon. An example is the recently refurbished Belmont Road property, which is fully occupied by residents who would otherwise be homeless or living in B+B.

As a Policy Development Group we have a positive and constructive working relationship with the Cabinet having recommended a number of policies to it for approval over the past 12 months.

These have included:

- Hoarding
- Repairs and Maintenance
- Asbestos Management
- Tenure Reform and Tenancy Agreements
- Housing Initiatives' Plan
- Tenant Compensation
- Service Standards (updated)
- Asset Management
- Tenancy Agreement Project Plan
- Tenancy Management
- Housing Strategy
- Tenancy Strategy
- Tenant Involvement Strategy
- HRA Asset Management Strategy
- Variation to Standard Tenancy Agreement

Cllr Sue Robinson

Chair Homes Policy Development Group