

**Report for:** HOMES POLICY DEVELOPMENT GROUP

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Date of Meeting:	9 September 2025
Subject:	<b>MID DEVON HOUSING (MDH) SERVICE DELIVERY REPORT FOR Q1 2025-26</b>
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Jane Lock, Cabinet Member for Housing, Assets and Property
Responsible Officer:	Simon Newcombe, Head of Housing and Health
Exempt:	None
Wards Affected:	All wards
Enclosures:	Annex A: Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) – performance data for Q1 2025-26  Annex B: Tenancy Enforcement Activities – performance data for Q1 2025-26  Annex C: Rent Recovery – performance data for Q1 2025-26  Annex D: Building Repairs and Maintenance – performance data for Q1 2025-26  Annex E: Complaints data for Q1 2025-26

**Section 1 – Summary and Recommendation(s)**

This report has been presented in support of an ongoing commitment to provide a quarterly update to Members on activity undertaken by Mid Devon Housing (MDH), including some relating to enforcement.

It also contains performance information as measured in line with the guidance relating to the Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs). The Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) requires registered providers of social housing (RPs) to provide a report on a set of TSMs which includes perception and performance data.

The aim of this report is to provide an update on relevant data, some of which is required as part of the TSM submission, where available, in order to provide assurance and set out a broad scorecard of performance across the service.

New to the report is Annex E which provides quarterly updates on complaints data. This will not replace the comprehensive annual report provided to the PDG (for example the 2024/25 report considered at the PDG in June 2025), however it will give the PDG more up to date and ongoing information on complaints performance and trends throughout the year.

### **Recommendation(s):**

**That the PDG notes the outturn performance for Quarter 1 2025-26.**

## **Section 2 – Report**

### **1 Introduction**

- 1.1. MDH has approximately 3,000 homes in its management located across the District.
- 1.2. This report provides a summary of activity and performance for Q1 ending 30 June.
- 1.3. In accordance with this, data for Quarter 1 is provided on the following Annexes:
  - Annex A: Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs)
  - Annex B: Tenancy Enforcement Activities
  - Annex C: Rent recovery
  - Annex D: Building Repairs & Maintenance
  - Annex E: Complaints

### **2 Assurance requirements and reporting**

- 2.1 RPs are required by the RSH to provide effective assurance to Members and this should include relevant, updated performance data relating to service delivery.
- 2.2 The RSH takes a co-regulatory approach which means that Members are responsible for ensuring that MDH is meeting their standards. There are currently four consumer standards which were recently implemented following the implementation of the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023. Currently, RPs such as MDH are expected to have due regard to the required outcomes and specific expectations as set out in these standards, which are:
  - The Safety and Quality Standard
  - The Tenancy Standard
  - The Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard
  - The Neighbourhood & Community Standard

- 2.3 The Rent Standard, an economic standard, also applies and MDH is required to have regard to this.
- 2.4 Members also have responsibility to ensure that MDH is being open and accountable with regard to how the organisation meets its objectives. In line with the principles of co-regulation, RPs are required to support tenants so that they can shape and scrutinise service delivery and hold Members accountable.
- 2.5 The mandated TSMs are split into perception indicators, informed by tenant surveys as set out in paragraph 2.6, and management data. As the management data is recorded locally, the initial quarterly results are presented in Annex A. The aim is to that Members can be assured that data is being collected whilst noting these are ultimately annual returns and only the outturn figure for the whole year is relevant.
- 2.6 Perception data, in line with regulatory requirements, is currently collected through independent surveys which we have chosen to complete quarterly then aggregate and verify against the RSH reporting requirements at year end. This provides data that is more representative than that collected from a single snapshot survey. The aggregated results for these survey based TSMs will therefore not be available until after the final survey in Q4.
- 2.7 During these surveys, individual tenants are given an opportunity to provide limited feedback in response to some questions and were able to do this anonymously, if they wanted. Many tenants chose to give their name and address and enabling the housing team to follow-up.
- 2.8 This work was procured by a partnership involving MDH and two other local authority providers with retained housing stock. As a result, there will be opportunities for local benchmarking alongside national benchmarking once all RSH has collected all relevant data and it has been published, provided that all partners wish to participate in this.
- 2.9 The overall, final TSM outcomes and return to the RSH is due to be reported by 30 June 2026.
- 2.10 The work of different MDH teams is shown in the annexes. Information is provided on key areas of work. It is important for Members to be assured that the homes in management are safe and secure and to understand how teams are performing in relation to certain indicators relating to tenancy and estate management. There are legislative and regulatory requirements which RPs must adhere to. However, it is also important that service delivery also takes account of MDH's own policies and good practice.

2.11 This service delivery report sets out the following specific data:

- 12 performance data TSMs
- 10 perception survey data TSMs (annual survey data)
- Tenancy enforcement data
- Rent collection and debt data
- Full repairs data including Decent Homes
- Voids data (metrics determined by updated Voids Management Policy)
- Complaints data (metrics determined by the Housing Ombudsman Complaints Handling)

2.12 The TSMs include three measures designed to demonstrate how RPs are performing with regard to service delivery in connection with complaints. If a tenant remains dissatisfied following the conclusion of their complaint, they can escalate that complaint to the Housing Ombudsman Service (HOS). In the regulatory framework the role of the HOS has been expanded. Every year, RPs must undertake a review of compliance against the Complaints Handling Code, issued by the HOS which forms the basis of our annual report. As noted in the introduction, the full annual report will continue to be provided but additional quarterly updates on complaints have been added to this report to enable Members to track performance throughout the year.

2.13 In addition, it should be noted that there is a Memorandum of Understanding between the HOS and the RSH which allows the transfer of information with the aim of ensuring that any regulatory failings associated with service delivery as performed by RPs are identified and dealt with in the most appropriate way.

### **3 Performance and Context**

3.1 Annexes A to E contain comments and informative narrative on performance provided against specific metrics and there is further context provided below.

3.2 The results of the 2024-25 TSM results are published on the website. The results increased for each TSM question compared to 2023-24. The smallest increase was +3.4% for how the tenant feels their landlord listens and acts. The biggest increase was for how satisfied tenants are with their communal areas, increasing by +15.7%. These results will be followed by the 2025-26 results next year.

3.7 MDH team leaders meet with senior managers on monthly to discuss performance against a range of indicators across the business. This delivers a greater understanding and insight and ensures that performance is routinely monitored which in turn delivers an understanding of any pressures. This informs the allocation of resources, as appropriate.

## **4 Building Services**

- 4.1 Performance relating to this area of work is dependent upon having a full complement of operatives who have the necessary skills to manage the workload. Unfortunately, there were some challenges with regard to recruitment last year due to prevailing market conditions. This, combined with issues such as long term sickness, can impact on the ability of the team to manage the priorities. For this reason, priority was given to completing the most urgent works to ensure that they were completed on time, as well as to those routine repairs having the most impact upon tenants. Similar issues also affected the administrative team responsible for processing repairs requests.
- 4.2 Recruitment pressures have begun to ease, including some key trade roles. The service is however currently without a disrepair manager with interim cover arrangements in place whilst recruitment is underway.
- 4.3 Taking these resourcing issues into account, managers are satisfied that with the level of performance, especially as targets have been met, although, there is, of course, always room for improvement to ensure that 100% of repairs are completed on time.
- 4.4 Customer satisfaction with planned maintenance remains strong despite some challenging performance issues associated with a very limited number of contractors.

## **5 Building Services – voids specific**

- 5.1 The team which manages this work has been busy this year managing a large number of voids in both the housing revenue account and on behalf of the general fund strategic housing functions. The condition of the properties being returned has, on occasions, been poor, and it is a combination of these factors which has impacted the ability of the team to achieve set targets. Standard and major voids have been prioritised in order to ensure that the supply of available homes is maintained. However, some work, including that relating to decarbonisation, continues to take longer than hoped due to external resourcing issues and therefore the target relating to the turnaround time for these properties was missed.
- 5.2 Notwithstanding the above, the overall occupation is above the target of 97%.

## **6 Tenancy and Estate Management**

- 6.1 The Neighbourhood team works in partnership with other agencies to manage tenancy-related issues and those on the MDH estates, including anti-social behaviour. A new Officer was recruited and commenced work in July 2025, although, the team has still faced periods of staff absence. The team is now at

full capacity in regards to Neighbourhood Officers. Annex 2 shows performance with regard to some of the tools available to the team. Many of these can be used to support the management of reports of nuisance and anti-social behaviour.

- 6.2 In line with good practice, our Officers aim to address reported issues at the earliest opportunity. This may involve a variety of approaches, such as collaborative working with partner agencies, informal mediation by team members or referrals for formal mediation where appropriate. As a result, the data presented may not fully capture the breadth and complexity of the work involved in managing cases of nuisance and anti-social behaviour.
- 6.3 Addressing tenancy fraud remains a key priority, which is reflected through the higher cases logged in 24/25 (6 cases) compared to 23/24 (4 cases). All cases in 24/25 were referred to an external investigator. This type of fraud can take various forms, but fundamentally, when a property is occupied by someone who does not have a legal right to reside there, it reduces the availability of housing for those in genuine need. To safeguard housing resources, Officers take a proactive approach by promptly investigating any concerns raised and making appropriate referrals for further investigation and action where necessary.
- 6.4 Overall, under the updated service structure, the key Tenancy Manager role is vacant, pending current recruitment. This places pressure on day-to-day and longer term decision making, however interim cover arrangements continue to be in place with the Operations Lead and Head of service.

## **7 Income Collection**

- 7.1 The Income Neighbourhood team collection rate is well within the target of <5% attributed to current dwelling tenants. This compares favourably with the 2.22% at the end of Q1 in 24/25 and continues to be encouraging given the historic rent error judgement and pressure to support is resolution. This is in parallel with managing a cohort of tenants challenging MDH on their rent and rent payment position, especially those tenants we have overcharged. The team continues to engage with tenants and supports those that may be experiencing financial difficulties.
- 7.2 In managing rent arrears, the team adopts a supportive and empathetic approach, working proactively with tenants to address any financial difficulties they may be facing. Tenants are encouraged to engage with the service, and where appropriate, are offered referrals to debt counselling and money advice services. The overarching goal is to foster a culture where all tenants are supported in maintaining their rent payments. To help achieve this, the team provides realistic and manageable repayment plans tailored to their individual circumstances.

- 7.3 Just a single rent eviction was taken forward in Q1 which was not materially impacted by any historic rent overpayment and where there were also other factors involved with that case.

## **8 Complaints**

- 8.1 The first Q1 reporting shows that all complaints at both Stage 1 and Stage 2 were handled within target. The percentage of complaints upheld during the quarter was below average, which for 2024-25 was 49.5% and 58.1% for Stage 1 and 2 respectively, compared to 35.7% and 33.3% for this quarter.

## **8 Recommendation**

- 8.1 The following recommendation is made:

**That the PDG notes the outturn performance for Quarter 1 2025-26.**

## **Financial Implications**

The activity of MDH is funded through the Housing Revenue Account (HRA). The HRA is ring fenced and subject to specific financial controls. The Housing Ombudsman Service (HOS) charges a mandatory membership fee based on the number of homes in the management of the registered provider (RP) of social housing.

## **Legal Implications**

The tenancy agreement defines MDH's relationship with tenants and sets out the rights and responsibilities of both parties. This takes account of legal and regulatory requirements. The Council is an RP and therefore is required to comply with the regulatory framework operated by the RSH. The regulatory framework has been reviewed. The Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard contains provisions relating to the management of complaints. There is also a requirement for MDH to manage complaints in accordance with the Complaints Handling Code (the Code) which is issued by the HOS. Landlords are expected to self-assess against the Code. Landlords are required to use the learning from complaints to drive service improvement. Following publication of the Social Housing White Paper in late 2020, the Social Housing Regulation Act 2023, has now been implemented and gone into statute.

## **Risk Assessment**

The Council has approximately 3,000 homes in management and the performance of MDH impacts upon the lives of many thousands of tenants and their families. This represents a huge responsibility and investment, consequently a major area of risk. Not providing an effective housing management service has the potential to result in failure to meet legal and statutory obligations including those relating to health and safety issues, repairs obligations, tenancy fraud, and reputational issues which could result in our tenants feeling stigmatised. Failure to collect rental income could impact the ability to fund necessary management and maintenance activities.

Finally, a failure to provide adequate information on service performance for the purposes of governance and scrutiny is a specific area of non-compliance with the requirements of the RSH. This regulator has new powers to impose performance improvements and potentially fine registered providers where performance is poor and/or adequate assurance is not provided.

### **Impact on Climate Change**

None directly arising from this report.

### **Equalities Impact Assessment**

MDH has a collection of housing related policies. The use of these helps to ensure that service delivery is consistent and fair. These are currently being reviewed with the aim of aligning them more closely with the Regulatory Standards. There is a regulatory requirement for registered providers of social housing to tailor their services to meet the needs of tenants. MDH requests diversity data from tenants to enable compliance to be monitored. MDH is required to work with people from all sections of society and having an agreed policy ensures that all tenants and other stakeholders are treated in the same way with adjustments being made to meet their needs, as necessary. The Housing Ombudsman Service Complaints Handling Code which MDH adhere to also requires landlords to have an awareness of accessibility so residents are easily able to access the complaints procedure via several routes.

Our “Getting to Know You” project has been designed to refresh our knowledge relating to the diversity of our tenants and over the next two years, we will be surveying them in an effort to better understand their needs.

### **Relationship to Corporate Plan**

Homes are a priority for the Council and this includes increasing the supply of affordable homes in the District and also supporting and growing active tenant engagement

### **Section 3 – Statutory Officer sign-off/mandatory checks**

**Statutory Officer:** Andrew Jarrett

Agreed by or on behalf of the Section 151 Officer

**Date:** 1.9.25

**Statutory Officer:** Maria de Leburne

Agreed on behalf of the Monitoring Officer

**Date:** 1.9.25

**Chief Officer:** Andrew Jarrett

Agreed by or on behalf of the Chief Executive/Corporate Director

**Date:** 1.9.25

**Performance and risk:** Stephen Carr



Agreed on behalf of the Corporate Performance & Improvement Manager

**Date:** 22/08/2025

**Cabinet member notified:** Yes

#### **Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers**

**Contact:** Simon Newcombe, Head of Housing and Health, Regulation and Housing

Email: [snewcombe@middevon.gov.uk](mailto:snewcombe@middevon.gov.uk)

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#### **Background papers:**

Mid Devon Housing Strategies and Policies:

[Procedures, Policies and Strategies - MIDDEVON.GOV.UK](#)

The Regulatory Framework for Social Housing:

[Regulatory framework - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Tenant Satisfaction Measures:

[Tenant Satisfaction Measures Standard - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Housing Ombudsman Complaints Handling Code:

[Complaint Handling Code | Housing Ombudsman Service \(housing-ombudsman.org.uk\)](#)