

Asset Compliance Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 25 September 2024 at Shire Hall, Warwick at 6.00pm.

Present: Councillor Phillips (Chairman), Councillors Barton, Boad, K Dickson, Dray, Gorman, Hales, and Yellapragada.

Also Present: Councillor Adkins – Portfolio Holder for Housing & Assets.

12. **Apologies for absence**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Falp.

13. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

14. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meetings held on 28 May 2024 and 22 July 2024 were taken as read and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

15. **Asset Compliance Plan Progress**

The Committee considered a report from Neighbourhood and Assets. Following the independent asset review, the governance framework and action plan was underway in response to the recommendations. The report gave the Asset Compliance Committee an update on the current position and progress on the action plan.

Following the independent asset compliance review, a self-referral to the Regulator for Social Housing was made on the 9 November 2023. As reported previously, the Regulator had determined not to record a Breach of the Standard at this stage but to require regular reporting on progress in meeting the Action Plan.

Meetings were being held to update the regulator on a bimonthly basis, the most recent being on 10 July 2024.

The two specialist leads, Fire Safety and Building Safety continued to provide specialist assistance based on the specific competencies required around these areas, and liaison continued with Pennington.

Pennington Choices had completed a midpoint review. This had been very positive, and the draft was attached in the documentation for review. The policies had been approved and would be presented to Cabinet in October. Officers were working to complete procedures and process charts across Assets and Housing.

A further meeting of the Compliance Board was held on 11 September 2024 and matters raised were reported at this meeting.

Appendix 1 to the report was the updated highlight report with columns to provide further context for the Committee.

With the self-referral to the Regulator completed, and the outcome now known, the Pennington midpoint review received, additional regulatory information provided and specialist resources in place, the Compliance Action Team had reviewed and updated the target dates in the action plan. This review had meant that there had been a change to the end date of the overall project.

There had been some revisions to target dates and the overall end date of the project. This was based on the Pennington midpoint. Revised target dates were as in in the last report and one further amendment had been made as below:

Recommendation number	Target Date	Revised Target Date	Reason for change
Recommendation 5	30.04.24	31.03.25	Revised target date had changed from being completed on 30.04.24 to 31.03.25 due to the Pennington midpoint review stating all physical inspections needed to be complete prior to the recommendation being complete.
Building Safety Recommendation 2	30.08.24	31.03.25	Following discussions with Letrice Thomas, Head of Knowledge at Pennington's they had selected Ashton Court high-rise building to use as the pilot to develop our first building safety case. Pennington's format of developing and delivering Building Safety Cases was also being assessed by the Regulator with another housing provider and the outcome of this process would be of benefit for sharing with WDC.
Recommendation 16	30.08.24	29.11.24	Due to the internal and external annual leave summer periods the contractor performance review template was being rolled out to all contractors. Regular contract review meeting cycles would be well established by the end of November as these performance review meetings would become a business-as-usual activity.
Building Safety Recommendation 5	31.05.24	29.11.24	Revised target date had been changed from being completed on 31.05.24 to 29.11.24 due to recommendations from Pennington in the midpoint review for improvements to current resident engagement documentation.
Building Safety Recommendation 6	19.07.24	29.11.24	Revised target date has been changed from being completed on 19.07.24 to 29.11.24 due to recommendations from Pennington in the midpoint review for changes to the policy, process map, and procedure for building specific complaints. Amendment is being made and looking to be taken to October Cabinet Meeting.

These target dates continued to be monitored and if there were a need for additional revision of dates, Compliance Board and Asset Compliance

Committee would be advised as soon as possible.

Appendix 2 to the report was a copy of the data compliance dashboard. This reporting would continue to further evolve and improve over time. Officers had received and placed in ActiveH the required data from the Contractors databases.

As reported at previous meetings, from the Housing Revenue Account, £270,000 of resources would be used for specialist consultancy support and additional technical resources covering asset compliance, fire safety and building safety. This ensured the Council had the right skills, experience and competence immediately in the organisation to help drive forward critical and high priority actions.

During 2024/25, the Council would consider the resources necessary to sustain the improvements being made to ensure compliance was maintained. This was to ensure that 'kneejerk' structure changes were not made, and proposals recommended would be thoroughly considered and sustainable.

Appendix 3 to the report was the updated risk assessment. This was reviewed by the Compliance Board when it met on 11 September and any comments were noted at this meeting.

Since the last meeting the risks had been reviewed and there were no changes made.

The Portfolio Holder for Housing and Assets, thanked the officers for their work.

In answer to questions from Members, –the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Assets, the Deputy Chief Executive, the Head of Housing, Health, and Communities, the Neighbourhood and Assets Project Manager, the Building Safety Lead, and the Fire Safety Lead advised Members that:

- Pennington had completed a midpoint review which was positive;
- there were eight recommendations to be completed by 30 September 2024 in the Action Plan. Six of these recommendations, namely 7, 8, 28, 20, 23, and 24 needed further investigation;
- officers would be discussing these with the Compliance Manager week commencing 30 September 2024;
- if it were necessary for any of the recommendations to be pushed back to a later date, the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Assets would report back to the Committee week commencing 30 September 2024, together with the reasons why and the updated time frame;
- there had been eight new properties added to the Housing Portfolio;
- the image of an arrow pointing sideways on the compliance section to the report indicated the status remained the same;
- the Council would be sending electrical works orders out six months prior to when they were due. This would allow more time to gain access to the property and complete remedial works;
- there had been a procedural change, to be more robust, around gaining access to properties for gas and electric checks;

- there was a need for residents to understand the urgency and importance of allowing access to gas and electrical contractors;
- there were existing KPIs for both the Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating and the number of properties that had had an EPC rating assessment;
- EPC ratings would be added to the ActiveH dashboard;
- the number of properties that had undergone an EPC assessment would be added to the ActiveH dashboard;
- arrangements would be made for a representative from Pennington's to attend Committee early in the new year to present report findings; and
- the HQN report listed 105 actions. The report was much wider than Pennington's report, focusing on four consumer standards.

Following publication of the regulatory decision on Housing, it was considered appropriate to revise the remit of the Compliance Board and this Committee. These provided greater overview of the Housing Service more generally and greater focus for Members in oversight of this vital service for the Community.

In answer to questions from Members, Head of Governance & Monitoring Officer advised that:

- the size of Committees were set each year;
- it would be appropriate for this Committee to give consideration to appointing a Vice Chair;
- if the Committee were minded, the Independent Remuneration Panel could be asked to consider if an allowance for the Chairman of the Committee was appropriate;
- it would be appropriate to create a work program for this Committee;
- the terms of reference for the Committee made it clear that this Committee would have overall responsibility for the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) but officers would need to look at scheduling this scrutiny as part of the work planning process;
- there were quarterly meetings of the Chairman of this Committee with both the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Audit and Standards Committee;
- it was appropriate for further training to be arranged for the Committee, to include training provided by a representative from HQN;
- prior to submission to Council the tracked changes be removed from the proposed Terms of Reference; and
- the last sentence of the Terms of Reference would be revised to ensure clarity.

Recommended to Council that

- (1) the revised remit of this Committee as set out at Appendix A to the minutes, be agreed; and
- (2) the Head of Governance & Monitoring Officer be asked to consult the Independent Remuneration Panel on a Special Responsibility Allowance for the Chair of the Committee.

Resolved that

- (1) the progress made as set out in the report, be noted;
- (2) the revised remit of the Compliance Board, set out at Appendix 6 to the report, be endorsed; and
- (3) subject to the agreement of Council, on the revise remit of the Committee, officers develop a work programme for the Committee, including training and scrutiny of the HRA budget, in partnership with the Chair of the Committee and the Chair of Overview & Scrutiny Committee, for this Committee to consider at its next meeting.

(The meeting ended at 6.35pm)

CHAIRMAN
27 January 2025

**Proposed Terms of reference Housing Scrutiny Committee
(adopted by Council?)**

The Committee will meet every other month.

Their purpose will be to review and challenge the progress in respect to ensuring compliance for safety under the Social Housing (Regulation) Act and overall view on the operation and delivery of the Housing Investment Plan and the HRA.

They provide assurance on the delivery of this to Cabinet (as the responsible body) on behalf of the Council.

The reports will be subject to pre-meeting questions process.

The Committee will be politically proportionate to the Council.

The Leader of the Cabinet will permit the Chair of this meeting to represent the views of the Group in line with the rights provided to the Chair of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

The Leader and Portfolio Holder for Housing & Assets will be required to attend each meeting, to act as an observer, and send a deputy from the Cabinet if they cannot attend.