

Tenant Voice Panel

5th March 2026 1pm

Attendance – Barbara Rickards (Chair), Teresa Fox, Richard Hinson, David Thomas, Kim McBride, Carol Lawson, Jackie Collier, Valerie Hall, John Furniss, Mac Potts

Staff – Lucy Tyne, Annette Mullaney, Carol Reynolds (Tenant involvement officers), Sarah Thompson (Tenant involvement manager), Carl Doolan (Head of Housing and Landlord services), Vicky Young (Service improvement manager), Abi Downie (Strategy and performance manager), Hannah Heinemann (Head of housing delivery and partnerships)

1. Welcome and apologies – apologies from Lesley Peplow, Gary Bridge and Colin Blake.

2. Minutes of the meeting held on 11th December 2025

2.1 Barbara ran through the minutes page by page and asked members for any comments. Barbara asked if Jackie's point regarding contractors verifying their identity to tenants has been taken on board. Sarah confirmed that there is now a working group set up for this. Jackie's suggestions will be taken on board.

2.2 Lucy asked the group if they preferred the more concise minutes she has been circulating or wanted more detailed ones. It was agreed that both could be shared. Lucy will be using an AI tool to help with the more detailed minutes.

2.3 The minutes were approved as a correct record and will be updated to the website.

3. Performance information – Abigail Downie

3.1 Abi ran through a handout shared in advance of the meeting. It was noted that the group appreciated how Abi had altered the layout of the information to make more accessible and easier to understand.

3.2 She said that broadly, many areas were progressing towards compliance, with gas and lifts nearing a compliant position, which was positive. She explained that recently there has been some properties that had been empty for very long periods that have now been re-let – this has impacted the average void re-let time to be higher.

3.3 Abi explained that housing standards are determining whether properties meet the Decent Homes Standard, as an overall figure for stock compliance needed to be reported to regulated social housing at the end of the financial year, which was the end of March.

3.4 Mac asked a couple of questions, he asked Abi to clarify the number of homes NYC own – she confirmed the total ‘stock’ was around 8,300, this is around 7500 households. Abi clarified that it’s still early days for the tenant census, ideally the council would love 100% response rate but 60% is the minimum. He also asked if the quickest void relet was 127 days, Abi confirmed that was correct. Mac asked if he could speak with Abi away from the meeting, Lucy confirmed she would help set this up.

4. Service improvement update – Vicky Young

4.1 Vicky explained that the service improvement plan was a result of the council self-referring to the regulator of social housing and receiving a C3 grading. This improvement plan details how compliance is set to improve. She suggested that they needed to have a joint discussion about how that information was best presented to the panel. She said that they had taken the information to the overview and scrutiny committee the previous Tuesday, and while members had appreciated the detail, it contained a significant amount of writing. She said that the service needed to articulate the information better to the panel, members, and the regulator. David suggested bullet point summaries may be better.

4.2 Lots of improvement works are ongoing; some have been completed. The council are in a position to where they need to conduct a ‘stock take’ of their current position and what still need to do. NYC have commissioned Savills, an external consultant, to review not only their progress against the regulatory judgement but also their compliance with all consumer standards. She said that Savills had provided recommendations that were not a surprise. She said that their top recommendations concerned the pace of movement, suggesting a dedicated IT strategy for housing that would detail current needs and future ambitions for service delivery. She said that Savills had also recommended changes to their complaint handling procedure and more dedicated resources for the complaints function, which the scrutiny committee of tenants had also considered. She said that there were also recommendations regarding the governance of the housing service, recognising the substantial workload of the Housing Improvement Board, which was dealing with both improvement works and business-as-usual performance monitoring. She said that these functions should be separated, with performance and operational matters handled at one level and improvement works at another, overseen by a board, with careful consideration of how the tenant voice would feed into both.

She said that she would like that forum to be involved in that work before it returned to the Improvement Board. Lucy will speak with Vicky to plan for this.

4.3 Jackie asked if a vulnerable tenant register had been collated yet – Vicky explained that this is a piece of work that will be made possible because of the tenant census.

4.3.1 The extra resource in complaints was acknowledged – Vicky welcomed this and acknowledged that the service does know more resource may be needed.

4.4 Vicky went on to discuss the learning and development strategy – this is something that registered providers have introduced as a result of the regulator of social housing introducing a Competence and Conduct Standard, aiming to professionalise the housing service. It sets out how the council are committed to train their workforce, and how they plan to provide qualification training (Level 4 or 5 in housing management) to relevant senior managers. This strategy also sets out how the council plan to provide training to involved tenants and members. Vicky asked the group to have a read over the strategy and provide any feedback they may have.

4.5 Lucy asked if the group would be interested in helping to create an induction type of training pack for tenants who chose to join the tenant voice panel. The group welcomed this.

6. Housing and Landlord services update – Carl Doolan

6.1 Carl began by asking the Chair what sort of information the group would like him to bring to meetings. Barbara explained that updates around staffing, projects and new changes in landlord services would be great.

6.2 Carl went on to update the group on a few things in his service. He spoke about independent living and how a review of that part of his service is beginning. A meeting with tenants from those schemes was held recently; a few of the members of the group were in attendance. Carl shared he thought it was a positive start, and the next steps will be to hold meetings at each scheme locally and set up a smaller working group of independent living tenants to move forward with the review. Jackie shared her frustrations about outstanding works in her home – Carl acknowledged that big improvements were needed.

6.3 Carl mentioned the revised tenancy agreement that will be in place in April. He shared that this project had taken a long time to develop and had generated interesting feedback. Mostly around a lack of understanding about certain aspects of existing tenancy agreements, particularly concerning joint tenancies and what happened if one joint tenant

ended the tenancy. He said that there had been no change to the legal position that one joint tenant could end the tenancy on behalf of all joint tenants.

6.4 He then went through the policy work affecting his service – grounds maintenance, mutual exchange, rent setting, and leaseholder policy and shared ownership. All of which required updated procedures, systems, and training. He said that there was a lot more to it than just agreeing to a policy. He said that a significant pinch point was the need to do everything simultaneously, whereas normally, such reviews would be on a three-year cycle. He said that this was a major challenge for his lone service improvement colleague.

6.5 Carl spoke about the rent increase that was agreed and how this increase in rent will help to improve stock. This conversation brought up a few questions. Barbara asked if rents were now the same across the county – would a 2-bed house in Harrogate be the same rent as a 2 bed in Selby. Carl confirmed they wouldn't be the same, but they would be within a small tolerance of each other.

6.6 Continuing, Carl spoke about the tenant census, he said this was a significant piece of work being coordinated on their collective behalf. He recalled that it had been one of the areas for which they had self-referred to the regulator, as they had not maintained accurate records of residents. He said that Acuity had been commissioned to support them, and some attendees might have been contacted via online or paper versions, or telephone follow-up. He hoped that everyone had completed it. He said that they aimed to obtain a minimum of 60 per cent of that data.

7. Housing Delivery update – Hannah Heinemann

7.1 Hannah went through some slides with the group. She explained that as part of the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) business plan in the previous year, it had been agreed to deliver a minimum of 500 new homes over five years. She said that the delivery plan had subsequently been scaled up, and recruitment had commenced from the previous April to deliver that programme. She said that homes were delivered through a range of mechanisms, including new build schemes on their own HRA land or other council-owned land, which typically had a longer delivery timeline. She said that they were also looking at renovations or conversions of existing council-owned buildings, which had been a quicker focus in the first and second years. She said that new build acquisitions from developers were also pursued, either through Section 106 agreements, where developers had to provide a certain percentage of affordable homes, or by securing and purchasing homes that had been on the open market for the HRA. She said that they were also working with Lovells to establish a joint venture company between the council and Lovells to deliver new

homes, including open market homes, but with increased affordable provision on those sites, enabling the HRA to purchase them. She said that the fifth delivery mechanism involved working with the council's housing development company, Briley Homes, to deliver more affordable homes.

7.2 She shared some figures with the group - 27 homes had been completed in the previous financial year, which had been a low number because the team had still been building. She said that in the current year, they were on track to deliver up to 70 homes, with 30 already completed, though some might slip into the following April rather than being completed by the end of March. She provided a ten-year split, noting that there had been 39 social rented homes, 39 affordable rented homes, and 19 shared ownership homes in that cohort. She said that Homes England had recently opened its new social and affordable homes programme for grant bidding, which significantly emphasised the delivery of social rent, aiming for 60 per cent of all funded homes to be social rent, though it was not a strict target.

7.3 Concluding, Hannah said that looking forward, they had 63 homes in the pipeline for the following financial year, 165 for the year after that, and 243 for the years beyond. She said that those figures were constantly changing as new opportunities were identified. She provided examples of delivered homes, including three empty homes in the former Craven district, some of which were very rural, which had undergone major renovations and were now completed, with only minor snagging outstanding at one property. She said that they had purchased 20 new build homes from a developer in Eastfield, Scarborough, comprising a mix of two, three, and four-bedroom homes available for rent.

7.4 Barbara asked about the tenure mix of the delivered homes. Hanna confirmed that the homes delivered so far were a mix of shared ownership, affordable rent, and social rent. She clarified that 39 had been social rent, 19 shared ownership, and 39 affordable rent. She said that they always tried to prioritise social rent, but the delivery team had to ensure financial feasibility, so including other tenures often allowed for more overall delivery.

7.5 Jackie asked about the difference between social rent and affordable rent. Hannah said that social rent was based on a formula, while affordable rent was defined as up to 80 per cent of market rent. Lucy said that if people wanted more information on rents and their calculation, they could prepare something for a future panel.

7.6 Teresa asked if they were only building houses for families or if they were considering different styles of property, such as blocks of flats, given the high number of people needing rehousing and experiencing homelessness. Hannah said that the need for one-bedroom accommodation was massive across the country and within North Yorkshire. She

said that they always tried to deliver one-bedroom accommodation and aimed for a mix of house types (one, two, and three bedrooms) in developments, as it tended to work better overall.

7.7 Barbara asked about Bracewell Homes. Hanna confirmed that Bracewell Homes still exist as a standalone company, exclusively dealing with shared ownership properties, purchasing, and managing them, but not social or affordable rent.

8. Any other business

8.1 Kim gave an update on the tenant scrutiny panel. The group have finished their project on the complaints process. They took the action plan to the housing and leisure overview and scrutiny committee on Tuesday. Members were very keen to collaborate with them going forward. They have chosen to look at the lettable standard as their next project. They plan to speak to some newly signed up tenants, speak to officers from the service and inspect some empty properties before and after.

8.2 Lucy covered tenant involvement spending – she explained that she had not been able to get these together in order to present today but since the last time we met, we have only spent money on refreshments and transport. The scrutiny group aren't working with the consultant anymore so there is a difference in spending there. We will get figures updated for the next time we meet. She suggested to the group that they can always find training, resources and events they would like to attend themselves and the tenant involvement team will do what they can to ensure they can have those opportunities.

8.3 The tenant involvement team gave a wider tenant involvement update – Lucy explained that they had held some community drop in events in the last couple of months – they didn't have as much attendance as we thought despite holding one on a Saturday in a town centre. We think it would be better to tag on to existing events that tenants go to rather than trying to hold our own.

8.3.1 The grounds maintenance focus group are meeting with members again at the start of April to progress further with that work.

8.3.2 Some involved tenants are currently giving feedback on some tenant guides around retrofit works and stock condition surveys.

8.3.3 As part of the tenant census that is currently happening over 300 tenants have said they want to be more involved going forward. The team are going to reach out to them soon.

8.3.4 Lucy confirmed that information about the gardening competition was in the Spring Open Door.

8.4 Barbara asked if an update on choice-based lettings could be given at the next meeting.

The meeting was closed at 2:50pm

The date of the next meeting is Thursday 4th June – 1pm – 3pm