Committee Chair Report

Plus Dane Housing

Name of meeting	Plus Dane Board		
Report title	Customer Assurance Panel (CAP) Chair's Report	**Agenda item**	7.1
Date of meeting	21 May 2026		
Author & job title	Rachael Johnston, CAP Chair		
Report status	Assurance and Approval		
Confidentiality	Non-Confidential		
Appendices	a. CAP Terms of Reference		

1. Committee meeting summary

1.1 The panel discussed a wide range of issues to discharge its duties in accordance with the Terms of Reference at the Quarter 4 meeting held on 29 April 2026.

1.2 Panel considered performance updates focusing on complaints and repairs, the Tenancy Standard self-assessment, progress with embedding the Customer Voice Framework, Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSM) performance and noted the further review of targets for 2026/27 at both Purpose Committee and Board which resulted in a number of the targets being increased.

2. Recommendation

2.1 Board is asked to:

a. Confirm assurance with the activities conducted at Customer Assurance Panel.

b. Recommend approval of the self-assessment against the Tenancy Consumer Standard.

3. Items to be brought to Board's attention

3.1 Whilst members were surprised to see the TSM performance targets being increased on the basis that these had already been supported by panel members, they acknowledged that due to the Board seeking to overall increase rather than decrease the targets, that this could only be seen as a positive move for customers and were keen to see the further insight from Housemark shared with Board members in relation to how Plus Dane was performing and the overall direction of travel in leading the way.

4. Hearing the customer voice

4.1 Positive progress to embed the Customer Voice Framework continues. Following the Away Day outcomes, we have now commenced customer involvement in procurement activity, beginning with customer participation in the Sustainability Forum. Customers met with the Plus Dane Procurement Team and our Sustainability Manager to help shape the specification for the forthcoming Retrofit contract, due for renewal this autumn.

4.2 Whilst complaints performance was discussed elsewhere on the agenda, the challenges of an increasing number of customers using AI to submit complaints was discussed and members appreciated the challenges this can present for Officers, increasingly so because it can be difficult to understand the root cause of a customer's dissatisfaction, making it more difficult to agree a suitable resolution. However, members were keen that Plus Dane also promote the benefits of AI to customers, as whilst its use can present challenges, it also creates a number of opportunities for both the organisation and customers to work and communicate more efficiently. Members were assured to see that this is being considered as part of the training for commissioned services through We are Digital.

4.3 In response to performance data which identified Castlefields as being the most dissatisfied Plus Dane neighbourhood, social impact activity has been significantly strengthened there. Customers have been actively involved in identifying environmental hotspots through a walkabout with the Environmental Services Manager. This has led to an agreed 'Big Tidy Up' in June, aligned with the national Big Help Out and Big Lunch initiatives. In addition, the Community Resilience project delivered by Wellbeing Enterprises is nearing completion; a final report with recommendations will be shared with CAP at the July meeting. Whilst noting this positive activity, members suggested that this approach should be adopted in other areas where satisfaction is low, such as Bootle/ L20.

Items for approval

5. Terms of Reference

5.1 Members further reviewed the annual refresh of the Terms of Reference (TOR), taking account of feedback received at the Away Day, specifically to clearly set out membership rules in line with the Customer Voice Framework, by specifying that CAP members cannot also be members of any panels established under the framework. A copy of the TOR is included at appendix A.

5.2 In addition to the TOR, members reviewed the Schedule of Business and were supportive of the inclusion of a number of additional updates throughout the year on projects which will have a direct impact on the customer experience, these being the Homes project, Operations Transformation and the approach to Building Safety Engagement with customers.

6. Tenancy Standard

6.1 Members reviewed the annual self-assessment of the Tenancy Standard and were assured by the reduced number of improvement actions when compared to the self-assessment completed in April 2025, and that this assessment included no areas of non-compliance. This is the third self-assessment completed, and members understood the reasons why proposals to progress a furnished tenancies pilot had been deferred whilst competing priorities related to Operations Transformation and Locality Planning work was underway.

6.2 Members were further assured to see the inclusion of additional evidence being added to the self-assessment relating to nominations, allocations and lettings performance, and the progress made in relation to training to tackle tenancy fraud.

Items for assurance

6.1 Members discussed the repairs performance and the recent increase in repair volumes in what is traditionally the busiest quarter for repairs demand, coinciding with high levels of annual leave within the team. Whilst Work in Progress has increased, members were pleased to see that this was still being managed at 6% of annual repairs volumes, against a target of between 5-7%. Members agreed that this is a strong position to be in as we enter Q2 and 3, where repairs demand traditionally reduces. Members were keen to see this performance continue to be reflected in TSM repairs performance, as has been the case over the past 12 months.

6.2 Members also discussed the continued challenges relating to complaints, and whilst pleased to see total number of cases in the year reduce compared to 24/25, albeit by modest numbers, the number of escalations to stage 2 raised concerns around Officers taking ownership to address customer dissatisfaction. However, members noted that escalation rates are comparable with sector peers and is in part reflective of the operating environment, and continued pressure to deliver services with increasingly finite resources. Members noted that an internal deep dive is underway to analyse the reasons for stage two escalations and were supportive of this insight being shared with CAP when this is available.

7. Meeting review

7.1 Members felt this was a positive meeting in terms of paper content, discussion, and contained a healthy mix of challenge and debate. Members noted the resignation of the newly appointed member Mark Johnson due to personal reasons, however, were pleased to see the recent recruitment of new members increasing the diversity of the group, and to balance the number of customers in terms of the Cheshire/Merseyside split.

7.2 In addition, members highlighted how pleased they were with the current trajectory of performance, particularly in areas where it has a significant impact on customer satisfaction and want to thank the teams for their continued commitment to delivering services in what is a challenging environment.

Rachael Johnston

CAP Panel Chair