

## Housing chief executives - WhatsApp summary

January – February 2026

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### A note to readers

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These notes summarise recent discussions on Campbell Tickell's WhatsApp group for Chief Executives of housing associations and ALMOs across all four UK jurisdictions and the Republic of Ireland. A full summary of discussions from the inception of the group is available on request.

This is a closed group, open only to CEOs in housing associations and ALMOs. It currently has around 260 members.

While discussions are confidential and unattributable, members of the group are keen for the content themes and issues to be shared widely to assist with broader understanding.

**Please note:**

The following digest highlights matters that have been discussed in the group. None of the content should be treated as representing the collective views of the group as such, or be attributed to any of its members. The group is an information-sharing forum and not a policy-making body.

### Contact us

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If you are a housing CEO who would like to join, please email [james.tickell@campbelltickell.com](mailto:james.tickell@campbelltickell.com) or [greg.campbell@campbelltickell.com](mailto:greg.campbell@campbelltickell.com).

### Latest highlights, January – February

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#### Rent convergence and policy

1. The group showed a strong interest in the Rent Convergence announcement on 28 January. Rent convergence will resume from 2027, permitting formula-rent uplifts above CPI+1% (£1 from 2027, £2 from 2028).
2. Members discussed implications for finances, especially regarding 5%/10% flexibility. It was noted this flexibility appears to be removed, which disappointed several members.
3. Wider policy announcements were discussed, including on DHS2, MEES and National Housing Bank loans.

#### Tenant communication and newsletters

4. A thread revolved around the continuing need for printed tenant newsletters, with 9 of the 11 responses saying that they still provided printed newsletters.

5. Some noted declining engagement (e.g. 35% click-through on digital newsletters) as a driver for maintaining print formats. A few organisations blend print with QR codes directing tenants to online resources.

### **Procurement, audit, and business continuity planning (BCP)**

6. Smaller organisations reported challenges recruiting procurement managers and instead rely on external consultants to manage key procurement exercises. Recommendations for consultants, shared service models, and long-term external support arrangements were shared.
7. Members whose external auditors are retiring asked about alternatives; multiple recommendations were shared.
8. Internal audit related discussions highlighted the option of deep-dive models rather than traditional internal audit programmes.
9. Support was sought to develop practical BCP frameworks focused on call-cascades, communications and scenario responses, with an emphasis on the need for short, usable documents rather than long manuals that sit on shelves.

### **Fraud prevention and technology**

10. Increases in tenancy application fraud were reported. Some organisations are exploring using external partners to conduct ID, land registry, or open-banking checks. The use of online application platforms with automated validation was suggested, as these can significantly reduce fraudulent applications and resource demand.
11. Concerns about Heat Network regulations were shared, with some reporting Ofgem appeared unprepared for provider questions. Others confirmed registration but described the experience as a “*nightmare*”, particularly regarding ombudsman arrangements.
12. Interest in smart home technology policies is growing, with members seeking organisation-wide policies for connected devices, data use and tenant permissions.

### **Litigation challenges**

13. Pursuing ASB and arrears-related litigation was highlighted as a challenge, particularly following the Mazars case. Some cited local courts (especially for instance in Hampshire) as increasingly resistant to eviction. Reviewing delegated authorities or changing solicitors were recommended.

### **Governance: board papers, protocols and KPIs**

14. A discussion took place on internal rules and processes for using board-paper portals.
  - Most organisations send papers at least seven days in advance, with some preferring 10 days to include two weekends.

- There was widespread agreement that pre-meeting questions should be limited to factual clarifications, not debate. The majority set cut-offs 24-48hrs before meetings.
  - Some organisations discourage platform-based questions entirely to avoid misinterpretation and governance issues.
  - Others find pre-meeting questions improve governance when managed well, particularly for less experienced board members.
15. The CT survey on Board KPIs has closed and results would be shared in the group. [Note these were shared on 5 March.]