



Housing Engagement Board

Quarterly Meeting

15 December 2022 – 14:00 to 16:00

Agenda Pack

Housing Engagement Board Agenda

Date: **Thursday, 15 December 2022**

Time: **14:00 – 16:00**

Venue: **Zoom (Virtual Meeting)**

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1. Welcome and Apologies

The Chair will welcome all present and apologies will be noted.

2. Quorum

A quorum shall consist of 50% of members.

3. Minutes of Previous Meeting – 20 September 2022 and Matters Arising

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 September 2022 are included for approval.

Housing Engagement Board
Minutes of the Quarterly Meeting
held on Tuesday, 20 September 2022
from 13:00 to 16:00 via Zoom

Attendees: Cllr John Batchelor – Chair
Cllr Jose Hales
Cllr Mark Howell
Dave Kelleway – Vice Chair
Jim Watson
Les Rolfe
Margaret Wilson
Peter Tye

By Invitation: Julie Fletcher (SCDC – Services Manager – Housing Strategy)
Geoff Clark (SCDC – Services Manager – Tenancy and Estates)
Eddie Spicer (SCDC – Service Manager – Housing Assets)
Rebecca Gane (SCDC – Leasehold Services Team Leader)
Bronwen Taylor (SCDC – Resident Involvement Officer) – Minute taker
Gina Manderson (SCDC – Housing Communications Officer) – Admin Support

Apologies: Peter Campbell (SCDC – Head of Housing)

1. Welcome and Apologies

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting at 13:04 and advised that Jennifer Perry had taken an ill-health early retirement, adding that the recruitment process would start shortly. He added that John Taylor had resigned and thanked him for his time and contribution to the board.

Councillors Jose Hales and Mark Howell advised that they need to leave the meeting at 13:55 as they had training at 14:00.

Apologies were received from Peter Campbell.

2. Quorum

The meeting was quorate.

3. Minutes of previous meeting – 22 June 2022

The Chair thanked Dave Kelleway for chairing the previous meeting and referred to the minutes of the meeting held on 22 June 2022.

They were proposed by Les Rolfe and seconded by Jim Watson as a true reflection of the meeting.

Matters Arising from previous Meeting – 22 June 2022

3.1 Item 3 – Minutes

Co-option Process (item 61)

The Co-option Policy has been added to the Forward Plan.

Dave Kelleway said that as there was a vacancy, this needed to be looked at sooner than December 2022. He added that Peter Campbell had been looking at the policy and suggested that it be looked at between meetings.

The Chair said that he would organise this with Peter Campbell.

Update on Doubling Nature Project (Item 5.2)

Geoff Clark confirmed that when major work to trees had been completed, the parish council for the ward where the tree was located was notified. They were also advised when new trees were planted.

Dave Kelleway said that some trees that had been planted by the parish council had been chopped down without their knowledge and they should be advised before work was done.

Geoff Clark advised that some of that work had been done through the tree audit and that SP Landscapes had advised the council that the trees were in a very poor condition and that the work needed to be done urgently. He added that the onus was on the council for maintaining those trees and to get the work done quickly when they were in a dangerous condition. He said that going forward the council would advise parish councils when tree surgery work was being planned.

Audit Accounts (Item 7.1)

Geoff Clark has contacted Margaret Wilson.

Margaret Wilson said that she had asked for audit accounts for the communal halls for all sheltered accommodation which had not been received.

Geoff Clark asked if they were the audit accounts for the communal room itself?

Margaret Wilson said that it was for the expenditure and receipts so that the residents who pay the service charges could see what had been spent and received.

Geoff Clark said that Rebecca Gane could explain how it worked for leaseholders and he would set up a meeting with Margaret Wilson, Les Rolfe and Rebecca Gane.

Action by: Geoff Clark

3.2 Item 5.1 – Estate Inspection Policy

1. Geoff Clark requested the HSO team to include adjoining roads in future Estate Inspections if time permitted.
2. Victoria Laxton, the HSO, sent an email to Les Rolfe on 23 June 2022 explaining that the storage container belonged to the contractors who were carrying out refurbishment work at the blocks of flats and that it would be removed once the work was completed.

Les Rolfe referred to last week's estate inspection and said that the HSO was reluctant to walk around the sheltered estate as this was the responsibility of the SEO. He added that although she had previously gotten into trouble for reporting issues at a sheltered estate, we still inspected the sheltered areas.

Geoff Clark said that it made sense to have both the HSO and SEO attend estate inspections when there were both general needs and sheltered houses on the estate.

Bronwen Taylor said that the SEO was going to attend the inspection, however, was sick on the day.

3.3 Item 5.2 – Key Amnesty in relation to Tenancy Fraud

Rebecca Gane will give a presentation on Empty Properties and Repairs under item 5.3 of the agenda.

4. Standing Items

4.1 Update on Repairs Contract

Eddie Spicer referred to the updated report and communication letters included in the pack, and said they had been sent to residents, members and staff, and the media.

The Chair said that following the results of the STAR survey, tenants preferred being contacted by post or phone.

Eddie Spicer said that all communication letters had been posted and that the type of communication would be tailored to each tenant and recorded on the system.

Margaret Wilson said that the South Cambs portal was still difficult to use and her main concern was who made a decision on the type of repair. She said an example was that her front porch could have asbestos, however, it had only been painted over and she asked who she needed to contact.

Eddie Spicer said to contact Mears and should the job fall out of their remit, then they would forward it to the council.

Dave Kelleway asked if the council knew where all asbestos was.

Eddie Spicer said that they did and that there was a programme in place to review it regularly. He added that it did not need to be removed unless it was dangerous.

4.2 Forward Plan

Julie Fletcher referred to the Forward Plan included in the pack and said that this would be a standard item on the agenda. She said that due to the resignation of John Taylor, she would bring the Co-option policy forward. She added that Budget and Rent Setting would be looked at in December 2022 instead of October 2022. She asked the board if other items should be added.

Dave Kelleway said that the Co-option policy needed to be tweaked before advertising for a new board member and that the Mutual Exchange Policy was urgent.

The Chair said that there were a lot of items for the December 2022 meeting.

Julie Fletcher said that the Garage and Land Review could be moved to March 2023.

The Chair said that once the amendments had been made, the document could be circulated.

Action by: Julie Fletcher

5. New Matters

5.1 Stigma Project Presentation

Julie Fletcher gave a presentation on the findings of the Stigma survey which she said came about from the national focus following the Grenfell disaster and the outcome of the Social Housing White Paper. She said the main theme coming out of the survey was that tenants were not being listened to, that their views were not important and that there was a stigma attached to those living in social housing. She said that the next steps were working on a Housing Service Improvement Plan, developing the Communication Service Standards, communicating more widely including sending out positive messages and mandatory training for housing staff.

The Chair said that this was prime material for the South Cambs magazine, to which Cllr Hales agreed.

Margaret Wilson said that she found this a very interesting and valuable exercise, and hoped that South Cambs took it as a learning curve.

A discussion on the results of the survey was held.

Margaret Wilson said she thought that planners should be more involved and social housing should be indistinguishable from privately owned housing, and not hidden away.

The Chair said that council houses on modern estates are now the same as private houses and are situated in “ace” positions with lovely views over the countryside.

Julie Fletcher said that the other arm that she works in was planning policy and making sure that as best as possible, we do integrate the social housing.

Action by: Julie Fletcher

5.2 Complaints Toolkit

Julie Fletcher referred to the document included in the pack. She also referred to item 8 of the “Complaints Handling Code – Self Assessment” document and said that a service manager group was being set up to look at trends.

Dave Kelleway referred to item 3.1 on page 55 of the pack and asked if the “complaints officer” would be trained to handle complaints.

Julie Fletcher said Grace Andrews was the dedicated complaints officer and that part of her role was to make sure that complaints were dealt with properly.

5.3 Buy back of Equity Share Properties Presentation

Geoff Clark advised that there had been some questions about equity share properties and Rebecca Gane had been invited to present on this topic.

Rebecca Gane went through the document on Equity Share Properties included in the pack.

Les Rolfe asked from the older style leases, where you have to buy back, why do not have to go back into general stock?

Rebecca Gane explained that those properties that were 75% owned and were part of the general fund we were legally not allowed to put them into general stock and they had to remain as equity share which was dictated by the Secretary of State. She added that anything that was purchased back that was less than 75% owned would go back into general stock and goes into rented, and would be available for rent.

Les Rolfe asked why one was being used as temporary housing?

Rebecca Gane said that when first time buyer leases are bought back by the council, they are used as temporary accommodation. She added that there were legal reasons behind that, which were historic.

Les Rolfe said that a property on his sheltered estate, that had been bought back by the council, was being used as temporary accommodation and housed tenants that are not suitable tenants for a sheltered estate.

Geoff Clark said that some properties were original designated for first time buyers and shared ownership on certain estates, when they were built, and were part of the planning regulations. He added that when they came back to the council, they did look at the original leases designed around those properties, however, there were some inherent legal difficulties around changing those leases and bringing them back into general needs properties. He said they do serve a purpose in providing temporary accommodation for homeless families at short notice, as opposed to using other forms of temporary accommodation such as bed and breakfast. He added that the council does have a pool of about 30 properties around the district that were used for this purpose and said that he thought the property that Les Rolfe had referred to was on the edge of the sheltered estate.

Les Rolfe said that it was on the edge of the estate, however, one had to drive through the estate to get to it and that it was the bane of all the tenants. He added that the current tenant was running a car breakers business from the side access.

Geoff Clark said that he would have a conversation separately with Les Rolfe.

Margaret Wilson referred to a property next door to her that had been empty for 4 years and before the tenant passed away, had been living in a care home for 18 months. She asked how the council dealt with such cases.

Rebecca Gane said that they are aware of this particular property and that it was with the council's litigation team. She added that this case was a particularly long process as well as being unique.

Peter Tye said that this was a good article and asked for it to go into the next magazine.

The Chair said that it could go in the magazine.

Action by: Geoff Clark and Gina Manderson

5.4 Annual Report to Tenants

Gina Manderson presented the draft Annual Report to tenants and asked for feedback from the board.

Dave Kelleway said that the report looked good.

Peter Tye asked if it was necessary to include the number of complaints, and asked if it was counterproductive and not in context, due to covid.

Margaret Wilson said that she thought that complaints could be conveyed as a positive and not always in a negative light.

Gina Manderson said that this was something to look at.

Action by: Gina Manderson

5.5 Tpas Conference Feedback Reports

Margaret Wilson referred to the feedback reports included in the pack and said that she had nothing further to report.

Dave Kelleway thanked the tenant volunteers for attending the conference.

Julie Fletcher said that she hoped that the work we were doing was worthwhile.

6. Any Other Business (AOB)

6.1 Meeting Start Time

The Chair requested for the meeting start time to be changed from 13:00 to 14:00.

The board agreed with the time change.

Bronwen Taylor said she would re-send the meeting invitations with the start new time.

Action by: Bronwen Taylor

6.2 Emergency Telephone Number

Margaret Wilson referred to a house fire on her estate the day before and said that when she tried calling the emergency number it had been discontinued. She said that she phoned the council's number and was told by the customer services officer that that was the only number they had.

Geoff Clark said that he would look into the issue of the telephone number.

Action by: Geoff Clark

6.3 Recruitment Process

Julie Fletcher referred to the recruitment documents in respect of the Resident Involvement Team Leader role and thanked the board for their comments. She said the interview panel would comprise of 2 officers and 2 tenant volunteers, and each person could submit 4 questions. She requested that questions or suggestions were submitted through Dave Kelleway.

6.4 Grant to Purchase and Plant Trees

Geoff Clark said that we have received a grant of £49,000 to purchase and plant trees within the county council, which will see 40 new trees.

Dave Kelleway asked why it was only 40 new trees and had the areas already been identified.

Geoff Clark said the grant included the aftercare of the trees for the next 3 years, and yes, the areas had been identified.

7. Meeting Dates

The Chair referred to the meeting dates as follows:

- 15 December 2022
- 23 March 2023

8. Closing

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting ended at 14:58.

The items raised at the previous meeting have been actioned and are below for noting.

Matters Arising from previous Meeting – 22 June 2022 (Item 3.1)

Audit Accounts (Item 7.1)

Action: Geoff Clark to set up a meeting with Margaret Wilson, Les Rolfe and Rebecca Gane to discuss audit accounts for leaseholders.

Report back: Geoff Clark sent an email to Margaret Wilson 19 October 2022 with an explanation of the audit accounts. A copy of the email is included in the pack.

For noting and will be discussed under item 5.3.

Forward Plan (Item 4.2)

Action: Julie Fletcher to amend the Forward Plan as follows:

- The Co-option policy to be looked at sooner than December 2022 due to the resignation of John Taylor.
- The Budget and Rent Setting to be looked at in December 2022 instead of October 2022.
- The Garage and Land Review policy to be moved from December 2022 to March 2023.

Report back: The Forward Plan has been amended and a Policy Officer has been employed to look at all Housing policies.

For noting.

Stigma Project Presentation (Item 5.1)

Action: Julie Fletcher to ensure that the key points were included in the SCDC magazine.

Report back: Articles on the Stigma Project results and development of the Improvement Plan would be published internally. A further article was being drafted to be included in the Spring edition of the SCDC magazine.

For noting.

Buy back of Equity Share Properties Presentation (Item 5.3)

Actions:

1. Geoff Clark to contact Les Rolfe about the issue of the tenant on his estate who use the side access for running a car business.
2. Gina Manderson to include an article on Equity Share Properties in the next housing newsletter.

Report back:

1. Geoff Clark advised that the tenant that was referred to would be moving in a few weeks' time and they were working with them to address the current condition of the property.
2. Gina Manderson to include an article in a future newsletter.

For noting

Annual Report to Tenants (Item 5.4)

Action: Gina Manderson to email the draft Annual Report to Tenants to the board for their input and comments.

Report back: Feedback was received and the Annual Report has been printed and posted to tenants.

For noting.

Any other Business (Item 6)

Meeting Start Time (Item 6.1)

Action: Bronwen Taylor to re-send the meeting invitations for December 2022 and March 2023 with the new start time of 14:00.

Report back: The meeting invitations have been re-sent with the new start time.

For noting.

Emergency Telephone Number (Item 6.2)

Action: Geoff Clark said he would look into the discontinued emergency telephone number.

Report back: Geoff Clark advised that the emergency telephone number is active.

For noting.

Bronwen Taylor

From: Geoff Clark
Sent: 19 October 2022 08:43
To: Margaret Wilson
Cc: Bronwen Taylor
Subject: RE: HEB Quarterly Meeting - 20 September 2022 - Draft Minutes

Hi Margaret

Apologies I thought we had covered the point off already about Communal Room Accounts.

Below in bold text is a the response I received from our accounts service in response to questions I posed on this topic.

Perhaps if you could let me know why more detailed information is required than already provided I could ask our accounts team to look at that.

In respect of Leaseholders, they do receive more detailed accounts because the lease arrangements we have in place say we must produce this information for them.

The Sheltered leaseholder statements produced & distributed each September, show the actual costs associated with running a particular sheltered scheme for the previous financial year, split as follows:

- **Staffing cost**
- **Grounds maintenance cost**
- **Communal Room cost**

These costs are shared across all residents – both tenants and leaseholders.

Tenants pay a weekly charge alongside their rent based on the estimate – but we don't adjust at the end of year for the actual costs.

Leaseholders pay an estimated quarterly charge (same figures as tenants) but we do adjust this for the actual cost incurred. (Any difference is applied to the following year's invoice).

In addition, on the statement produced for leaseholders, they pay a contribution towards the external repairs/decoration of dwellings on the scheme & a 10% administration fee is added on too.

Tenants don't receive an annual statement – their rent statement just shows the weekly rent charge + the three weekly sheltered charges (Staffing, Grounds maintenance and Communal Room)

Geoff Clark CIHCM Service Manager – Tenancy and Estates

We process your data in line with our contract ([your tenancy agreement](#)). We may process the information you provide to prevent and detect fraud and may supply information to government agencies, credit reference agencies, audit or other external bodies for such purposes. We participate in the government's National Fraud Initiative, and further information is on our website: <https://www.scambs.gov.uk/content/national-fraud-initiative>
The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) updates your rights regarding how your data is processed. For more information, please visit www.scambs.gov.uk and search "privacy notice"

4. Standing Items

4.1 Update on Repairs Contract

An update on the Repairs Contract is included for noting.

Repairs Contract 2022 Mears

November 2022

The Latest Update

INSIDE

KPI's

Initial KPI figures are looking good and within targets

Technology

The repairs Portal is now LIVE

Customer Satisfaction

Initial summary looks very good



Contract Update

Eddie Spicer

Here is an update on the Repairs Contract with Mears which went LIVE on the 3rd October 2022.

After months of work and dedication by everyone involved the new contract started on the 3rd October 2022, the first week went very well, although there were some minor teething issues there was no direct impact on the service delivery provided to our residents.

The initial figures returned so far on performance of the contract such as completions within target, first time fix and so on have been good, all within the targets set. This has been very encouraging for the way we are running the contract now and the dedication to it from the operatives.

There has been a higher-than-usual number of compliments or positive comments made from residents, reps and staff since the contract started which has been very good to hear.

There have been some delays with the technology side of the implementation of the Online Repairs Portal, this is a system where residents, staff, carers, relatives, etcetera can book repairs directly online and book the appointment that suits them.

This will enable repairs to be booked at any time 24 hours a day, although some may still wish to use the conventional telephone method, this will also have benefit to them by freeing up call center time to answer calls quicker and have more time to deal with them.

The portal can be found here:

[Repairs Postcode Picker \(activehousing.co.uk\)](https://scambs.activehousing.co.uk)

<https://scambs.activehousing.co.uk/repairs-postcode-picker/>

A single phone number is now in use, the old Heating Contract number is being removed on the 20th November 2022 so all repairs will now be dealt with on:

0800 085 1313

Structure and staffing

Staffing at Mears has now been completed in line with the commitment's made for the contract. Increasing the team by 10.

6 new operatives multi trade, deployed across the service

2 new contact center staff to take calls and plan works

1 new Business Support Manager – Jane Dobbs

1 new Customer Success Coordinator – Jade Slater

At South Cambs

We have recruited to our vacant surveyors post and they start at the end of November and 2 other posts which were operating on reduced hours are now back to full time.

We have also gained an experienced administrator via an internal transfer to fill a vacant post.

This collectively means we have a full team now on both sides of the contract, all committed to the best possible service delivery.

4.2 Forward Plan

Julie Fletcher to provide an update on the Forward Plan which is included in the pack.

Housing Engagement Board – Forward Plan

Date of Meeting	Topic	Description	Lead Officer	Decision Route
24 March 2022	Project Initiation Document and Evaluation	Update on Project Initiation Document and Evaluation	Bronwen Taylor	For Information
24 March 2022	Tenancy Policy	Update on Tenancy Review / Policy	Geoff Clarke	Cabinet
24 March 2022	Doubling Nature Project	To update the HEB on the Doubling Nature Project	Geoff Clarke	For Information
24 March 2022	Tenant Satisfaction Survey	Update on project to undertake the Tenant Satisfaction Survey	Julie Fletcher	For Information
24 March 2022	Small Land Sales (HRA) Policy	To provide comments on the draft Small Land Sales Policy and procedures	Julie Fletcher	Cabinet – 22 March 2022 Final approval following HEB comments by Lead Member for Housing
Consultation in June 2022 Previous date was May 2022	Service Plan	To provide comments on the Service Plan for the Housing Service for 2022 / 2023	Peter Campbell	Sign off by Lead Member for Housing
June 2022	Asset Management Strategy Action Plan	Prioritising the actions and monitoring progress in the Asset Management Strategy	Peter Campbell	For Information
June 2022	Estate Inspection Policy	To amend the number of inspections held per year	Geoff Clark	Housing Engagement Board
June 2022	Contract for Repairs / Maintenance	To provide an update of the appointment of the new contractor, transitional arrangements including tenant working groups being established	Eddie Spicer	For Information

Date of Meeting	Topic	Description	Lead Officer	Decision Route
Special presentation by MEL – July 2022 Previous date was May / June 2022	Tenant Satisfaction Report	To note the findings of the Tenant Satisfaction Report and agree actions to take forward	Julie Fletcher	Housing Engagement Board
September 2022	Stigma Project	To note the findings of the Stigma survey	Julie Fletcher	For discussion
September 2022	Annual Report to Tenants	To endorse the Annual Report which details how the council performed over the last year	Gina Manderson	Housing Engagement Board
September 2022	Buy back of equity share properties	Report on the process relating to the buying back of equity share leasehold properties and selling the new leases on. Further information on this was requested at the last Housing Engagement Board meeting	Becky Gane	For Information
September 2022	Endorsement of the Complaints Handling Self-assessment	Landlords are required by the Housing Ombudsman to undertake a self-assessment against the Complaint Handling Code and publish the results	Grace Andrews	Housing Engagement Board
October 2022 (outside of HEB formal meeting)	Budget and Rent Setting	Specific training session on the process for Budget and Rent Setting	Martin Lee	Training
December 2022	Budget and Rent Setting	Proposed budget for the housing service for 2023 – 2024	Martin Lee	Council to approve final budgets in February 2023
December 2022 Carried forward	Communal Areas Review	To receive an update on the Communal Areas Review	Geoff Clark	Housing Engagement Board

Date of Meeting	Topic	Description	Lead Officer	Decision Route
December 2022 Carried forward	Co-option Policy and Qualification Criteria	To approve the qualification criteria to become an elected tenant representative and to re-endorse the Co-option Policy	Julie Fletcher	Housing Engagement Board
December 2022	Mutual Exchange Policy	Update on the progress of the mutual exchange review	Julie Fletcher	Housing Engagement Board
December 2022	New Repairs Contract Performance and Scrutiny Team	Update and feedback from the tenant working groups	Eddie Spicer	For Information
December 2022	To approve the Housing Service Improvement Plan	Following the tenant & leaseholder satisfaction survey, an improvement plan to be agreed to increase tenant and leaseholder satisfaction	Julie Fletcher	Housing Engagement Board
March 2023 Carried forward The mobilisation of the Mears Contract has taken more time than expected. Project Group yet to convene.	Empty Property Relet Disposal and Standard	Consider findings and recommendations following the outcome of the project working group – Empty Property Relet Disposal and Standards	Eddie Spicer	Housing Engagement Board
March 2023 [new]	Housing Engagement Board	To appoint Chair and Vice Chair for the forthcoming year 2023 – 2024	Chair	Housing Engagement Board
March 2023	Review of Resident Engagement Framework	To report on the review of the resident engagement framework to ensure it is robust and fit for purpose; and meets the requirements of the Social Housing Regulator	Resident Involvement	Housing Engagement Board

Date of Meeting	Topic	Description	Lead Officer	Decision Route
March 2023 Carried forward	Garage & Land Review	Update of findings of the Garage & Land Review and recommend actions	Kirstin Donaldson	Cabinet
March 2023	Mutual Exchange Policy	To approve the mutual exchange policy	Housing Policy Officer – Abida Ruma	Housing Engagement Board
March 2023 [New]	Asset Management Strategy Action Plan	Update on the progress of the actions contained in the Asset Management Strategy	Julie Fletcher	For Information
Briefing session to be arranged outside of HEB for tenant representatives March 2023	Greater Cambridge Housing Strategy	Review of the Greater Cambridge Housing Strategy	Julie Fletcher	Consultation
June 2023 [New]	Complaints	Review of yearly complaints handling statistics 2022 / 2023	Grace Andrews	For Information / Scrutiny
June 2023 Carried forward Project delayed. Appoint of temporary Policy Officer November 2022	Policy Review	To provide an overview of current policies – identify gaps and programme for reviews	Policy Officer	Housing Engagement Board
June 2023 [New]	Improvement Plan	Update on the progress of the actions contained in the Improvement Plan	Julie Fletcher	For Information
TBC	Council Stock Condition Survey	Outcome of the Stock Condition Survey. Tenant Working Group set up	Eddie Spicer	For Information

Date of Meeting	Topic	Description	Lead Officer	Decision Route
TBC	Together with Tenants Charter	Review what actions are required to achieve the Together with Tenants Charter	Resident Involvement Team Leader	Cabinet
TBC	Homelessness Review	Review of Homelessness & Homeless Strategy	Heather Wood / Sue Carter	Consultation

5. New Matters

5.1 7% Rent Cap

Martin Lee to report.

5.2 Budget and Rent Setting

Budget Training by Martin Lee, SCDC Housing Accountant, was given to the Tenant Representatives on 18 October 2022.

Martin Lee to discuss the proposed budget for 2023 / 2024.

5.3 Sheltered Housing Schemes – Audit Accounts

Margaret Wilson has requested that residents of Sheltered Housing schemes be provided with an annual break-down of communal hall accounts, that is a record of income and outgoings.

Martin Lee to report.

5.4 Communal Areas Review

Geoff Clark to report.

5.5 Co-option Policy

Julie Fletcher to provide an update on the Co-option Policy.

The following documents are included in the pack.

- Report – Qualification Criteria and Co-option Policy Review
- Appendix A – Elected Tenant Representative Qualification Criteria
- Appendix B – Elected Tenant Representative Co-option Policy

Report to:	Housing Engagement Board (HEB) 15 December 2022
Lead Officer:	Julie Fletcher – Service Manager – Housing Strategy

Qualification Criteria and Co-option Policy Review

Recommendations

1. That the Housing Engagement Board (HEB) approves the qualification criteria to become an elected tenant representative (Appendix A) and endorses the existing Co-option Policy as fit for purpose (Appendix B).

Reasons for Recommendations

2. To ensure that the qualification criteria to become an elected tenant representative is fair, equitable and transparent.

Details

3. The tenant representatives on the Housing Engagement Board requested that the Co-option Policy be reviewed following some issues identified during the previous co-option process.
4. A meeting was held between officers and the tenant representatives to discuss the issues identified. Whilst it is considered that the existing Co-option Policy is fit for purpose and robust and is in accordance with election protocol, the qualification criteria lacked detail and clarity.
5. The qualification criteria has been developed in consultation with the elected tenant representatives, and where possible comments have been taken on board. It has been drafted to ensure it is fair, equitable and transparent and that there are no 'grey areas' as to whether a tenant qualifies or not to stand as an elected tenant representative.
6. The qualification criteria is relevant to both those wishing to stand as an elected tenant representative and also existing tenant representatives during their term within the role.

Appendices

Appendix A: Qualification Criteria

Appendix B: Co-option Policy

Appendix A

Qualification Criteria to become an elected Tenant Representative

- You are a tenant of South Cambridgeshire District Council
- You are aged 18 years or over
- You do not work for South Cambridgeshire District Council Housing Service
- You are not related to a member of staff – see additional criteria below
- You do not have any rent or service charge arrears which fall within the additional criteria below
- You are not subject to any tenancy issues as set out in Schedule 3 of the Housing Act (1985) and within Schedule 14 of the Localism Act (2011), as set out in the additional criteria below
- You do not have a criminal record as specified in the additional criteria

Tenants wishing to be considered for elected positions (including co-opted roles) must meet the qualification criteria set out above and sign a declaration to that effect as part of their application.

- a. If the tenant has not disclosed information that later comes to light which would disqualify them, that tenant will be immediately barred from standing.
- b. Similarly, if an existing tenant representative fails to meet any of the qualification criteria whilst acting in the role, they will be barred from that position.
- c. Applications to be an elected tenant representative will be assessed by either the Resident Involvement Team Leader, Service Manager – Housing Strategy or the Head of Housing to ensure the tenant meets the qualification criteria. This will be based on the signed declaration and will also involve checking the rent accounts and tenancy records for each applicant. Under the co-option policy, only those applicants that meet the qualification criteria will then be considered by the elected tenant reps for co-option.
- d. Any appeal to the decision of qualification will be carried out in accordance with the Council's complaints policy.

Additional Qualification Criteria

Related to a member of staff within the Council

If a tenant is related to a member of staff, they will be unable to stand / continue as a tenant representative in certain circumstances. This is not a blanket ban but applies only to people who

are related to senior members of staff. Tenants who meet one of the criteria in both Section A and Section B below will be unable to stand / continue as an elected tenant representative.

Section A – Nature of Relationship

- i. Spouse, civil partner or cohabiting partner
- ii. Any relative as defined within Section 258 (4) of the Housing Act 2004: namely a parent, grandparent, child, grandchild, brother, sister, uncle, aunt, nephew, niece or cousin. This includes people who have assumed that role, for example stepfather, or
- iii. Other people not listed above who reside in the same property as the member of staff.

Section B – Seniority of Staff Member

- i. Within the Housing Department or working within the Rents Team (part of the Revenue Services) and be in a management position of Grade 7 or above.
- ii. A member of the Council's Senior Management Team.

Rent Arrears

Where tenants have rent arrears, they will not be able to stand / continue as a tenant representative if the Council has served the tenant with a Notice of Seeking Possession or a Notice of Possession Proceedings and there are no arrangements in place to pay back the rent owed.

Other tenancy issues as set out in Schedule 3 of the Housing Act (1985) and within Schedule 14 of the Localism Act (2011)

If the tenant has breached their tenancy in any other way including Anti-Social behaviour and the Council has started action by any of the following, they will not be able to stand / continue as a tenant representative.

- Serving the Tenant with a Notice of Seeking Possession within the past 12 months
- Where the tenant or any member of the household has agreed to an ABC (Acceptable Behaviour Contract) within the past 12 months.
- Where the Council have taken out an injunction against the tenant because of their behaviour,
- Where the tenant has been informed that they are on the council's risk register because of their behaviour.

(Note that in this paragraph, and in line with the tenant's responsibility, reference to a tenant's behaviour also includes other members of the household and visitors to the property).

Criminal Record

The criteria to determine disqualification in relation to tenants with a criminal record is based on the criteria set out in legislation for the election of local government district councillors.

Tenants are unable to stand or continue as a tenant representative if they meet any of the following criteria:

- Where the tenant has been sentenced to a term of imprisonment of three months or more (including a suspended sentence), without the option of a fine, during the five years before application to become a tenant representative and the ordinary period allowed for making an appeal or applications in respect of the conviction has passed. A person who is in the process of making an appeal or application in relation to the conviction is not disqualified at any time before the end of the day on which the appeal or application is disposed of, abandoned or fails by reason of non-prosecution.
- Where the tenant is subject to any notification requirements or a relevant order relating to sexual offences as defined under the [Local Government Act 1972, Section 81A](#) (as amended April 2022).

Appendix B

South Cambridgeshire District Council (SCDC)

Housing Engagement Board (HEB)

Elected Tenant Representative (ETR) Co-option Policy

To ensure that a fair process is undertaken and that all ETR's are elected only by fellow tenants, the following procedures will take place:

When a vacancy arises

- 1) A vacancy that arises for an ETR during the term of office shall, providing there is at least six months remaining of that term at the date that the vacancy occurs, be filled by means of this Co-option policy.
If there is less than six months remaining of the term, then the vacancy will remain unfilled until the next election.
- 2) Following the vacancy arising, SCDC will inform all ETR's that the co-option process has been instigated.
- 3) As soon as practicable, SCDC will advertise the vacancy for a period of four weeks, as widely as possible, to include where possible the Council's website, social media, council magazines, press releases and any other available media.
- 4) Tenants / leaseholders from anywhere in the district shall be invited to apply, but it will be made clear that priority for co-option will be given to candidates who are resident in the same area as the vacancy and also priority will be given to leaseholder applicants if there are no leaseholders currently on the HEB and to tenants if there is already a leaseholder on the HEB.
- 5) Candidates will be invited to submit an application form and personal statement, in the same manner as for the normal tenant representative elections.

Receipt of applications

- 6) Following the receipt of applications, the following will apply:
If there are no qualified applications received by the published deadline, then the vacancy will be re-advertised for a further four weeks, providing that on the date of the published deadline there is still at least six months remaining of the vacant term of office.

If there are qualified application / s from the area covered by the vacant seat:

- a) If there is only one qualified application from the area covered by the vacant seat, then that applicant will be declared duly elected.
- b) If there is more than one qualified application from the area covered by the vacant seat, then there will be a vote at a special meeting of ETR's to determine the successful candidate, unless there is only one leaseholder applicant where there is currently no leaseholder member of the HEB, or only one tenant applicant where there is already a leaseholder on the HEB, in which case that candidate will be declared duly elected.

If there are only qualified application / s from areas **not** covered by the vacant seat:

- c) If there is only one qualified application from an area not covered by the vacant seat, then that applicant will be declared duly elected.
- d) If there is more than one qualified application from an area not covered by the vacant seat, then there will be a vote at a special meeting of ETR's to determine the successful candidate unless there is only one leaseholder applicant where there is currently no leaseholder member of the HEB, or only one tenant applicant where there is already a leaseholder member of the HEB, in which case that candidate will be declared duly elected.

Special meeting of ETR's

- 7) If a special meeting of the ETR'S is required, this will be held as soon as practicable after the deadline for nominations, with officers endeavouring to find a date and time when the maximum number of ETR's can attend.
- 8) If there is currently no Leaseholder member of the HEB, then only leaseholder applications will be considered. If there is currently a leaseholder member of the HEB then only tenant applications will be considered.
- 9) Copies of all relevant applications and candidate statements will be circulated to all ETR's at least five working days before the special meeting.
- 10) Applicants shall not be required to attend the meeting, but shall be invited to do so with at least five working days' notice, to give a short presentation on why they feel that they should be co-opted on to the HEB.
- 11) SCDC shall provide a clerk for the meeting who shall produce minutes of the decisions taken.
- 12) The quorum for the meeting shall be three ETR's, the meeting shall be open to the public and applicants may attend the whole of the meeting. Only ETR's may vote.

- 13) The ETR's present at the meeting shall elect a chair for the meeting from among their number.
- 14) The chair shall invite each applicant in turn to make a presentation lasting no longer than three minutes, followed by an opportunity for the ETR's present to ask questions of the candidate.
- 15) When this process is concluded, the ETR's can discuss the applications, without interruption from candidates or others.
- 16) When discussion is concluded, voting by the ETR's will take place by secret ballot, administered by the clerk to the meeting.
- 17) The successful candidate must achieve a majority vote of those ETR's present and voting, so if there are more than two candidates for one vacancy and none of them at the first count has an overall majority, then the candidate with the fewest votes should be eliminated and the remainder put to the vote again. This process should be repeated as necessary until one candidate has an overall majority.
- 18) If, after exhausting the above process, the last two candidates are tied on the same number of votes, then the successful candidate will be chosen by lot, conducted by the clerk to the meeting.
- 19) After voting is concluded, the Chair will declare the successful candidate duly elected to the HEB.

5.6 Mutual Exchange Policy

Abida Ruma, Housing Policy Officer, had a meeting on 25 November 2022 with the Tenant Representatives to discuss the Mutual Exchange Policy.

Julie Fletcher to provide an update.

5.7 New Repairs Contract – Performance Review Joint Working Group

An update on the Performance Review Joint Working Group is included for noting.



Repairs Contract Joint Working Group

The new resident involvement group we have set up is called the Repairs Contract Joint Working Group, this is made up of 3 members of each stakeholder, Residents, SCDC and Mears.

The purpose of the group is to work in collaboration and improve the service by monitoring the performance, constructive input on service delivery, supporting the service within the community, assisting with social value attached to the contract and being part of the process.

The group has already met to discuss purpose and terms of reference with the first active meeting due to be held on Friday the 2nd December 2022.

The residents involved are Patti Hall, Les Rolf and Paul Bowman.

Resident Involvement

Firstly, I would like to thank everyone who has been involved in the mobilization and transition to the new contract from the resident engagement team, to all those involved in the tendering, mobilization and now transition and future monitoring.

The resident involvement has been invaluable throughout this process, defined and considered challenges along the way which helped us to structure and develop the operational side amazingly.

The input and views have educated us in many ways too, understanding the thoughts and considerations put forward by the residents involved.

I intend for this to continue throughout the contract and potentially broaden across the service area.

The Future

The initial signs are very good, but we are always looking to improve and welcome feedback on the good and the bad. Things will go wrong from time to time but it's how we communicate them and resolve them that makes the difference. Please feedback to me on any comments, suggestions, or ideas you may have.

Please email me with any questions – eddie.spicer@scams.gov.uk



5.8 Housing Service Improvement Plan

Julie Fletcher to present the Housing Service Improvement Plan which is to be agreed by the board.

The following documents are included in the pack.

- Report – Improvement Plan following STAR Satisfaction Survey 2022
- Appendix A – Improvement Plan

Report to:	Housing Engagement Board (HEB) 15 December 2022
Lead Officer:	Julie Fletcher – Service Manager – Housing Strategy

Improvement Plan following STAR Satisfaction Survey 2022

Recommendations

1. That the Housing Engagement Board (HEB) approves the Improvement Plan following the STAR satisfaction survey carried out in May 2022 (Appendix A).

Reasons for Recommendations

2. To demonstrate that the Council listens to its tenants and acts upon areas of dissatisfaction.

Details

3. A tenant satisfaction survey was undertaken between March and May 2022. A questionnaire was sent to every tenant / leasehold household and a total of 2,112 surveys were completed, representing a response rate of 37%.
4. The key findings from the survey identified:
 - 89% were satisfied with their neighbourhood as a place to live
 - 86% were satisfied that their home was safe and secure
 - 80% were satisfied with the overall housing service
 - 77% were satisfied with the overall quality of their home
 - 75% were satisfied that the housing service was easy to deal with
 - 73% were satisfied with the value for money provided by their rent
 - 68% were satisfied with the way we deal with repairs
 - 62% were satisfied with the value for money provided by their service charges
 - 51% were satisfied that the Council listens to their views and acts upon them
5. Further information can be found on our website relating to the [tenant and leaseholder satisfaction survey](#).
6. Whilst work was already underway in terms of improving the repairs service and the quality of homes following approval of the Asset Management Strategy, the survey also identified that the housing service needed to improve in its communication and engagement with its tenants and leaseholders.

7. Following the findings of the survey, briefings were held with both staff and members of the Housing Engagement Board and the Housing Performance Panel. Following which, the tenant representatives have been involved in helping us to develop the Improvement Plan.
8. Whilst some of the actions will take time to implement and embed into the service, there is an expectation that satisfaction levels will increase over the coming years. Satisfaction will be measured as part of our performance monitoring and an annual survey will be undertaken each year to comply with the new requirements set out by the Social Housing Regulator.
9. Progress on the actions within the Improvement Plan will be reported on a six-monthly basis to the Housing Engagement Board.

Appendices

Appendix A: Improvement Plan

Improvement Plan following Star Satisfaction Survey 2022

Themes throughout the survey

- Sheltered tenants and those aged over 65 more satisfied
- Newer tenants and those in tenancies for more than 10 years are more satisfied
- Low levels of satisfaction with leaseholders

The following indicators have been selected from the study as areas that have a high correlation with the overall satisfaction of the service (scoring above 0.5) and also have a low level of satisfaction (scoring below 80%)

A) Being Easy to Deal with – satisfaction 75%, dissatisfied 11% (correlation score 0.78)

- Strong correlation between those that are satisfied with the repairs service and satisfaction that SCDC are easy to deal with
- Strong correlation between complaints and satisfaction that SCDC are easy to deal with. Only 55% satisfied with how we deal with complaints (16% dissatisfied)

Ref.	Action	Lead Officer	Target Date for Completion
A1)	<p>Review service standards, with resident involvement, on how we communicate both internally and externally – to include different methods of contact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To include all of housing service and rents • Protocol for the use of generic email boxes • Responding within specified timescales • Taking responsibility of initial contact • Quality of communication – appropriateness of formality / informality • Inappropriate use of emails when forwarding on internally, and ensuring emails are targeted. • Use of language – plain English, jargon free, reduce stigmatisation, etcetera • Ensure we signpost to other agencies where appropriate • Service Standards to be approved by the Housing Engagement Board. 	Housing Policy Officer / Service Manager – Housing Strategy	May 2023

Ref.	Action	Lead Officer	Target Date for Completion
A2)	Increase quality of communication – embed the revised service standards within housing, through simple guides, training and team meetings. Reinforce messages at every opportunity and include as part of induction process.	Service Manager – Housing Strategy (look to get external facilitator)	June 2023
A3)	Review current practices for the contact centre in terms of training and information provided – look to implement quarterly meetings with contact centre.	Service Manager – Housing Strategy to meet with Contact Centre	December 2022
A4)	Include as part of the interview process a test in terms of written communication for some jobs.	Service Manager – Housing Strategy	May 2023
A5)	Working with resident involvement, review standard letter templates in terms of plain English and being easy to understand.	Resident Involvement Team Leader	March 2023
A6)	Update tenant details and collect data on each tenant’s preferred method of contact as part of the tracking system for the new Mears contract.	Service Manager – Housing Assets	December 2022
A7)	Embed processes for constant updating of system by Mears, Housing and contract centre staff to ensure details are up to date	Service Manager – Housing Assets	December 2022
A8)	Where disabilities or other markers are flagged on the system, provide an individualised approach to follow up with the tenant / leaseholder the best ways to be contacted and any individual requirements.	Service Manager – Tenancy & Estates	March 2023
A9)	Working with resident involvement, review our communication channels for those with disabilities.	Resident Involvement Team Leader	March 2023
A10)	Establish the Housing Portal to enable simple transactions to be processed. Include tenant involvement to inform customer perspective.	Housing IT Project Manager	March 2023
A11)	Explore the opportunities through Orchard and Anite to incorporate a full workflow system that would be able to monitor and track service requests.	Housing IT Project Manager	March 2024
A12)	Ensure that where automated systems are used there is also clear information as to contact details for officer support for those residents who do not wish to / or cannot use the automated system.	Housing IT Project Manager	Ongoing

Ref.	Action	Lead Officer	Target Date for Completion
A13)	Undertake process mapping, including mapping the customer journey, for some key transactions to understand where the main barriers are. As part of the customer journey, look at different groups, such as those with disabilities as part of the mapping. Look at training for mapping, etcetera.	Service Managers / External Consultant	March 2024
A14)	Ensure continuity of service as consequence of change.	Service Managers	March 2023
A15)	Provide information on the website as to the housing structure	Communications Officer	January 2023
A16)	Survey sheltered housing residents to ascertain interest for setting up some digital training.	Community Impact Team Leader / Communications Officer	January 2023

B) Listening to views and acting upon them / communication – satisfaction 51%, dissatisfied 19% (correlation score 0.61)

- Strong correlation between those satisfied that SCDC listens to their views and acts upon them and those who are satisfied with the repairs and maintenance service
- Rated in the lower quartile of performance benchmarking

Ref.	Action	Lead Officer	Target Date for Completion
B1)	Review how and frequency we communicate with Leaseholders – demographics of leaseholders will change over time due to new shared ownership properties coming on board aimed at young families / couples.	Service Manager – Tenancy & Estates / Resident Involvement Team Leader	August 2023
B2)	Review Induction Process for new starters – to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • setting up 'meet and greet' type meetings with new starters on a regular basis with tenant / leaseholder representatives. • consider mandatory training (possibly through e-learning system) for all housing staff, which include the new Communication Service Standards and awareness of issues surrounding stigmatisation. 	Service Manager – Housing Strategy	September 2023
B3)	Set up a working group at service manager level to oversee complaints to ensure complaints process is being followed through, acknowledgement letters are sent and establish where some complaints could have been resolved before reaching complaint stage. Review how we communicate internally where complaints cover various service areas.	Data Quality and Improvement Team Leader	January 2023
B4)	As part of the governance arrangements, ensure complaint monitoring is overseen by the Housing Engagement Board.	Data Quality and Improvement Team Leader	March 2023
B5)	Roll out good practice in terms of complaints improvements made and publicise lessons learnt.	Data Quality and Improvement Team Leader	March 2023

Ref.	Action	Lead Officer	Target Date for Completion
B6)	Housing Communications Officer to attend service team meetings to develop a communications plan to publicise more localised information.	Resident Involvement Team Leader / Communications Officer	March 2023
B7)	Work more closely with the corporate communications team to gain recognition of the work the housing team do. This will also create an opportunity to reduce stigma.	Resident Involvement Team Leader / Communications Officer	March 2023
B8)	<p>Tenants / leaseholders need to feel more informed and included within decisions that affect their estate. This was a key message coming out of the Housing White Paper and national Stigmatisation Project. To support this objective we will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that where anything may impact on a tenant / leaseholder that they are informed and reasons why explained. • Work with resident involvement team to communicate changes to service provision. Take a pro-active approach to explain why there is a need for change. • Where possible, allow an element of choice for tenants when undertaking capital improvement works. Ensure tenants are fully informed of works being planned. 	Service Managers / Resident Involvement Team Leader	Process in place by March 2023

C) Opportunities to make views known – satisfaction 60%, dissatisfied 11% (correlation score 0.58)

- Rated in the lower quartile of performance benchmarking

Ref.	Action	Lead Officer	Target Date for Completion
C1)	Working with tenant involvement, review current internal satisfaction surveys, systems in place to capture information and how we use the findings for service improvement. Major transactions should be accompanied by a simple questionnaire. Consider use of text and telephone surveys.	Data Quality and Improvement Team Leader	March 2023
C2)	Use analytics from social media as a more informal way to measure satisfaction levels	Resident Involvement Team Leader / Communications Officer	From March 2023
C3)	Working with tenant involvement, explore opportunities for better engagement with younger tenants and leaseholders	Resident Involvement Team Leader	September 2023
C4)	Include tenant / leaseholder reps in the interview process for senior housing staff and other staff where appropriate. Undertake appropriate training for tenant rep interviewees.	Service Manager – Housing Strategy	March 2023
C5)	Working with tenant involvement, review the current resident engagement framework	Resident Involvement Team Leader	March 2023

D) Repairs and Maintenance Overall – satisfaction 68%, dissatisfied 19% (correlation score 0.60)

- Lower satisfaction levels for those living in flats
- Little difference in satisfaction levels for those that have or have not had a repair carried out in the last 12 months
- Dissatisfaction was highest for the time taken before work started (22%), getting the repair done right first time (20%), and being kept informed throughout the process (20%)
- Main areas for improvement – listen to tenants, keep them updated, quicker and better repairs, updates and refurbishing
- In lower quartile of performance benchmarking

Ref.	Action	Lead Officer	Target Date for Completion
D1)	Implementation of new Mears contract including new performance monitoring and review mechanisms. Establish new core working group that includes tenant involvement as part of the monitoring of the contract.	Service Manager – Housing Assets	Group set up from October 2022
D2)	Embed resident engagement standards in all new contracts let	Service Manager – Housing Assets	March 2023
D3)	Align Mears complaints policy with our internal policy to ensure complaints are clearly defined and in sync and that there are robust systems in place that meet the Housing Ombudsman requirements. Monitor both sets of data as part of our internal complaints monitoring.	Service Manager – Housing Assets / Data Quality and Improvement Team Leader	March 2023
D4)	Review Mears’ responses to complaints to ensure there is consistency in quality and language	Service Manager – Housing Assets	March 2023

E) Rent provides value for money – satisfaction 73%, dissatisfied 12% (correlation score 0.54)

Service charges provide value for money – satisfaction 62%, dissatisfied 17% (correlation score)

- New residents and those aged over 65 were most satisfied
- Those facing challenges in paying their household bills were less satisfied
- For the rent providing value for money we are in the lower quartile of performance benchmarking
- Leaseholders were significantly less satisfied than tenants, 32% of leaseholders dissatisfied with value for money of their service charge

Ref.	Action	Lead Officer	Target Date for Completion
E1)	Publicise how rent is spent and increase publicity on the things that we do well	Communications Officer	November 2022 for Annual report and ongoing throughout the year
E2)	Providing how we spend rent as part as the rent statement information as well as Annual Report to Tenants	Communications Officer	April 2023
E3)	Overall improved service and communicating improvements should increase satisfaction with rent providing value for money. Undertake a further satisfaction survey for all tenants as part of the new regulatory measures.	Service Manager – Housing Strategy	December 2023

F) Overall quality of home – satisfaction 77%, dissatisfied 14% (correlation score 0.59)

Reasons for dissatisfaction:

- Property is in need of updating or refurbishing
- Outstanding repairs that need completing / quicker repairs / do a better job
- Issues with mould and damp

Ref.	Action	Lead Officer	Target Date for Completion
F1)	Asset Management Strategy approved February 2022 that sets out the medium and long-term approach to maintaining and improving council homes. The Strategy sets out our priorities for the physical care and improvement of the council homes we provide, along with their surrounding environment. An Action Plan has been implemented that will be monitored through the Housing Engagement Board.	Head of Housing	6-monthly updates to Housing Engagement Board

G) Keeping communal areas clean and safe – satisfaction 69%, 7% dissatisfied

Ref.	Action	Lead Officer	Target Date for Completion
G1)	Undertake a communal areas review focussing on internal communal spaces within flats	Housing Services Team Leader	March 2023

H) Grounds Maintenance – satisfaction 71%, 13% dissatisfied

Ref.	Action	Lead Officer	Target Date for Completion
H1)	Develop standardised letters for grounds maintenance to save on Officer time and provide a consistent message	Service Manager – Tenancy Estates / Resident Involvement Team Leader	March 2023
H2)	Use our communications channels to publicise messages regarding grounds maintenance, that is reasons why we don't pick up grass – what tenants can expect, when will the grass be cut, etcetera.	Communications Officer	Throughout the year
H3)	Establish a core working group that includes tenant involvement for the monitoring of the grounds maintenance contract	Service Manager – Tenancy Estates / Resident Involvement Team Leader	September 2023
H4)	Look to include some grounds maintenance performance indicators as part of the contract monitoring	Service Manager – Tenancy Estates / Resident Involvement Team Leader	September 2023
H5)	Involve the tenant inspectors and tenant reps in any new procurement of contracts for grounds maintenance	Service Manager – Tenancy Estates	September 2023

I) Problems in the Neighbourhood

The overall score for 'Your Neighbourhood as a place to live' scored high with 89% of residents reported being satisfied with their neighbourhood as a place to live, with just 5% reported dissatisfaction. However, for those that were not entirely satisfied the following issues were highlighted as the top three problem areas (which is consistent with views nationally): Car Parking, Dog Fouling and Rubbish or Litter.

Ref.	Action	Lead Officer	Target Date for Completion
11)	Ensure issues are monitored and appropriate action taken through the tenant estate inspections	Housing Services Team Leader	Ongoing
12)	Publish what action have been taken following tenant estate inspections	Resident Involvement Team Leader / Communications Officer	Ongoing
13)	Plan at least one 'Volunteer Day' for staff and tenants to come together to 'clean up' or 'improve' an estate – work with parish council, include Mears.	Resident Involvement Team Leader / Service Managers	September 2023
14)	Consider issues with parking as part of the Garage Site review. Each site to be reviewed individually and where feasible / viable consider additional parking provided in front gardens	Service Managers – Acquisitions & Development and Tenancy & Estates	March 2024
15)	Explore opportunities to provide practical support for those with challenging behaviours where unkempt gardens are causing issues for neighbours.	Housing Enforcement Team Leader	June 2023
16)	Run twice yearly campaign on cleaning up dog mess.	Communications Officer	During 2023 / 2024
17)	Where high levels of dog mess are identified as part of estate inspections (both formal and informal) write to tenants / leaseholders to remind of responsibilities of owning pets, etcetera.	Housing Services Team Leader	Ongoing – Monitor as part of tenant inspections

J) Carbon Reduction – Energy Efficiency of Homes

- 66% felt that action on climate change was important to them, with a further 17% stating it was important, but other issues are of higher importance to them
- 66% were satisfied with the heating and energy of their home, with 22% dissatisfied.
- 51% of tenants felt their home was easy to heat adequately in winter months, with 27% reporting that they have difficulty in heating their home adequately in winter months.

Ref.	Action	Lead Officer	Target Date for Completion
J1)	Asset Management Strategy approved February 2022 that sets out the medium and long-term approach to maintaining and improving council homes. Energy Efficiency and working towards NetZero Carbon are key priorities within the Strategy, as set out within the Action Plan	Service Manager – Housing Assets	5 year plan – monitored 6 monthly at Housing Engagement Board

K) Household Finances

In the context of rising fuel costs and an increase in the cost of living, residents were asked if they face challenges in paying their household bills. Over a third of residents said that they do (34%)

Ref.	Action	Lead Officer	Target Date for Completion
K1)	Recruitment of three new posts to provide additional support for households facing financial hardship	Service Manager – Housing Advice & Options	January 2023
K2)	For those that have given consent through the survey (69%), Council to make contact to offer help and support	Communications Officer	December 2022
K3)	Signpost to support and advice through the website, social media and newsletter, and include within next Rent Statement.	Communications Officer	Website live – ongoing publicity

L) Preferred communications methods

68%	Letter by Post	13%	Website
62%	Telephone	8%	Visit to the Office
49%	Email	7%	Social Media
29%	Newsletter	7%	Self-service online (Website)
26%	Text / SMS	5%	Open Meetings
25%	Visit to your home by staff	1%	Other

Ref.	Action	Lead Officer	Target Date for Completion
L1)	Make better use of existing communications by post, that is Rent Statements to provide information	Communications Officer	Ongoing
L2)	Review the ways we contact as part of the Communication Standard	Housing Policy Officer	March 2023
L3)	Increase the number of email and text contacts we hold	Service Manager – Housing Assets	Ongoing
L4)	Review existing website to make it more user friendly	Communications Officer	March 2024
L5)	Increase the accessibility and ease for self-serve on-line but in consideration of those where this is not a preferred method of contact	Housing IT Project Manager	March 2024
L6)	Pilot area meetings as part of the resident engagement work to see whether they are the best use of resources	Resident Involvement Team Leader	June 2023
L7)	Explore the opportunity to provide campaign messages through the contact centre, rather than providing music whilst waiting. For example, promoting the Council’s website for those worried about the increasing cost of living, recruitment opportunities, etcetera.	Service Manager – Housing Strategy	January 2023

5.9 New Tenant Representatives Complaints Portal

A new Tenant Representatives Complaints form has been designed in order for tenant representatives to escalate queries on behalf of tenants. This form will only be used when tenants have followed the proper procedures and have received no feedback from their original query.

Tenant Representatives will be given training on the new system.

For noting.

5.10 New Resident Involvement Team Leader

Interviews for the new Resident Involvement Team Leader role were held on 3 November 2022. The interview panel consisted of Peter Campbell, Julie Fletcher, Margaret Wilson, Les Rolfe and Paul Bowman.

Julie Fletcher to provide an update.

5.11 Damp and Mould

Eddie Spicer to report.

6. Any other Business (AOB)

Any additional issues to be raised.

7. Meeting date for 2022 / 2023

- 23 March 2023 (Zoom / venue tbc)

8. Closing