

Housing Engagement Board

Quarterly Meeting

15 January 2026 – 2pm to 4pm

Agenda Pack



Housing Engagement Board Agenda

Date: **Thursday, 15 January 2026**

Time: **2pm – 4pm**

Venue: **Online Teams 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 Meetings – 25 September 2025 and 27 October 2025

The minutes of the meetings held on 25 September 2025 and 27 October 2025 are included for approval.

Housing Engagement Board

Minutes of the Quarterly Meeting
held on Monday, 25 September 2025
from 2pm to 4pm

in the Monkfield Room, South Cambridgeshire Hall, Cambourne

Attendees: Cllr John Batchelor – Chair

Vivienne Till (Elected Tenant Representative) – Vice-Chair

Cllr Eileen Wilson

Cllr Heather Williams

Peter Campbell (SCDC – Head of Housing) (on-line)

Amy Stock (Elected Tenant Representative)

Laura Nelson (Elected Tenant Representative) (on-line)

Margaret Wilson (Elected Tenant Representative)

Michael Luffman (Elected Tenant Representative)

Patti Hall (Elected Residential Leaseholder Representative)

By Invitation: Ivor Grant (Tenant Volunteer)

Geoff Clark (SCDC – Service Manager – Tenancy and Estates)

Eddie Spicer (SCDC – Service Manager – Housing Assets) (on-line)

Dave Armitage (SCDC – Resident Involvement Team Leader)

Bronwen Taylor (SCDC – Resident Involvement Officer) – Minute taker

Gina Manderson (SCDC – Resident Involvement Communications Officer)

Apologies: Jim Watson (Elected Tenant Representative)

Julie Fletcher (SCDC – Service Manager – Housing Strategy)

1. Welcome and Apologies

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting at 2.02pm and all present introduced themselves.

The Chair advised that the meeting would be recorded for the purposes of minute taking.

2. Quorum

The meeting was quorate.

3. Minutes of previous Meeting – 21 July 2025

The Chair referred to the minutes of the meeting held on 21 July 2025.

The minutes were approved by the board as a true reflection of the meeting.

3.1 Matters Arising from previous Meeting – 12 December 2024

The matters arising from the previous meeting are below.

Item 4.1 – Action : Julie Fletcher to change the wording in Point 10.2 in the ASB Policy from “non-council tenant” to “anyone not a council tenant”.

Report back: The wording has been changed.

Item 4.2 – Action: Dave Armitage to set up a meeting with Martin Lee, Housing Accountant, to go through the HRA account with the tenant volunteers.

Report back: The meeting will be held on 2 October 2025.

Item 4.6 – Action: Dave Armitage to set up a meeting with the tenant volunteers to discuss the process to follow on the Empty Properties Re-let Standards Scrutiny Project.

Report back: Dave Armitage to set up a meeting once the mock inspection by HQN has been completed.

Item 5.4 – Action: Amy Stock to send Eddie Spicer examples of late postal notifications from Mears about annual gas check appointments she received from tenants.

Report back: Eddie Spicer advised that the letters were sent from Mears central office and not their local branch, however, his team were investigating the matter.

4. New Matters

4.1 Water Meter Project

Peter Campbell advised the council had received funding from government to look into fitting restrictors to water meters. He said that this would be a way of reducing water usage and saving money. He added that tenants with medical needs would be exempt from this. He said that we were doing this in conjunction with County Council and that we would be going out to tender in October 2025.

A discussion on the restrictors, the flow of water and usage was held.

The Chair said that assurances were needed in that the equaliser flow should not affect the end user.

Eddie Spicer said that restricting the flow of water would save money in the long term. He explained that this did not effect the amount of water used, but the flow of water, for example when having a shower.

Ivor Grant asked when these would be installed.

Peter Campbell said that we do not have a date as we would be going to tender and then negotiations with the contractors would start.

4.2 Housing Enforcement Report – 2024 to 2025

Geoff Clark presented the report included in the pack.

The Chair asked if some of the cases were still ongoing.

Geoff Clark said that some were and advised that some cases were more complicated than others.

A discussion on the different types of cases, statistics and trends was held.

The Chair said that this report reflected that a great deal of work went on behind the scenes.

4.3 Resident Involvement Annual Report – 2024 / 2025

Dave Armitage presented the report included in the pack.

The Chair asked if the newsletters were well received.

Margaret Wilson said they were. She referred to the communal garden scheme on page 25 of the report and thanked Dave Armitage who was instrumental in arranging this.

Geoff Clark asked if this had been included in the newsletter to which Gina Manderson said that it had been.

Cllr Heather Williams referred to page 24, car parking on grass verges, and said that there was not enough parking in her ward.

Eddie Spicer advised that they were looking at parking areas. He advised that getting planning permission was difficult unless it was SCDC's land.

A discussion on parking issues was held.

4.4 Special HEB Meeting – 29 October 2025

Dave Armitage advised that a special HEB Meeting would be held on 29 October 2025 to approve the following policies:

- Electrical Management Policy
- Gas Safety & Servicing Policy
- Water Hygiene Policy
- Compensation Policy
- Assignment Policy

Cllr Heather Williams advised that the Anti-Racism Charter anniversary event was being held on the same day from 10am to 11.30am.

Bronwen Taylor said she would look at an alternative date.

Action: Bronwen Taylor

4.5 Annual Report to Tenants and Leaseholders – 2024 – 2025

Gina Manderson referred to last year's annual report and advised that she would be starting work on this year's report in the next few weeks. She said she would email a copy of last year's report to the board and she asked them to provide her with suggestions to be included in the report.

Action: Gina Manderson

5. New Matters

5.1 Forward Plan 2024 / 2025

Dave Armitage referred to the Forward Plan included in the pack and explained the purpose of the document. He went through the items planned for the coming months.

Margaret Wilson asked for the word “void” to be removed from all documents.

As this was an industry term, it was agreed that the word would be removed where applicable.

5.2 Contracts Review Panel

Geoff Clark advised that regular meetings to discuss the landscapes contract were held with tenant volunteers and a representative from SP Landscapes, the last one being on 3 September 2025. He said that the Grounds Maintenance Service Standards document had been updated and that the grass cutting schedules would be sent to the panel at the beginning of each month. He reported that the next contract to be reviewed was the Alarms and Monitoring Service for tenants and that he would be involving tenant volunteers in the tender process.

A discussion on the switching over to digital alarms was held.

5.3 Policy and Procedure Panel

Ivor Grant said that he was not aware that he had to give a presentation and that he had been made aware of this earlier that morning. He added that he was not aware that he was officially the Chair of this panel as he was advised that he would first need training.

Dave Armitage confirmed that he was the Chair, from the date that Brian Burton had stepped down, and that he would arrange training as requested by Ivor Grant. He said that Ivor Grant was not asked to give a presentation but to give feedback, if needed, on the notes from the meetings held which were included in the pack.

Bronwen Taylor advised that Brian Burton had drafted and circulated the meeting notes from the meeting held on 30 July 2025 and that she had circulated the meeting notes, drafted by Laura Nelson, from the meeting held on 3 September 2025. She added that she had not received any queries on the meeting notes.

Cllr Heather Williams referred to Policy Language in the notes on page 43 of the pack and said that conditional language should not be used as it could be manipulated.

Eddie Spicer said that these policies are backed up with legal documents in order to stand up in court.

A discussion was held on what decorating or alterations could be made by tenants, without getting permission from the council, was acceptable. It was agreed that minor alterations, such as putting up shelves or painting was allowed, however, major alterations, such as knocking down walls or running electric cables to an outside building was not allowed.

5.4 Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

Review Panel

Margaret Wilson referred to the notes included in the pack. She referred to the Ombudsman's definition of complaints which reads "An expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by the organisation, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting an individual or group of individuals."

Margaret Wilson said that when tenants submitted a complaint, it was often treated as a service request.

Peter Campbell said that he did not agree with Margaret Wilson. He explained that when an issue was first reported, it was a service request and if there had been a failure in that service, any subsequent contact was treated as a complaint. He added that we have checked our complaints policy and we were compliant with the Ombudsman's code for complaints.

Cllr Heather Williams gave an example of an elderly tenant who had lost the heating in her lounge last winter and because it was only lost in one room, it was not treated as an emergency. She asked what would be classed as an emergency repair.

Eddie Spicer said that as the heating was lost in one room only, it would not be classed as an emergency. He explained that the procedures on how we respond to issues had been changed slightly and the following were the updated response times:

- Emergency repairs – 4-hour response
- Standard repairs – 24-hour response

Cllr Heather Williams asked if Mears used a 3rd party on weekends and bank holidays, and she gave the example of a tenant whose washing machine, which had not been installed properly, had leaked and flooded her kitchen floor.

Eddie Spicer said that repairs reports were dealt with by the main branch between Mondays and Fridays, and the Milton Keynes branch for out of hours reports.

Margaret Wilson said that she felt that Sheltered Housing should be more closely aligned to General Housing protocols. She explained that sheltered housing tenants had to use a different system of reporting repairs which was either through their Sheltered Estate Officer (SEO) or by calling Mears directly. She added that the SEOs often reported that they were not given details of when or whether the repairs had been done in Communal Halls.

6. Any Other Business

6.1 Grounds Maintenance Maps

Margaret Wilson referred to the progress on the updating of the grounds maintenance maps and asked how many had been updated.

Geoff Clark advised that this was an ongoing process and that he did not know how many had been updated, however, he would check with the officer.

Action: Geoff Clark

6.2 Electrical Notice

Margaret Wilson referred to the email sent by Dave Armitage regarding the sample of a "Final Warning Electric Safety Check" notice which would be stuck on doors of tenants, where electricians had been unable to conduct an electrical safety check, to advise them that their property was non-compliant and that they could face legal action. She added that she felt it was quite harsh.

Dave Armitage explained that a change of legislation was being introduced in November 2025 whereby it would be mandatory for electrical inspections to take place and the notice sent in his email was an example of one that had been used by another organisation. He said the email was sent in order for tenant volunteers to provide feedback and to give their thoughts on the document. He added that the intention was not to name and shame people.

Eddie Spicer advised that this legislation would be applied to both social and private housing, which gave legal backing to access properties in much the same way as with gas inspections. He said that we already had a robust process in place for gas inspections and that we had backing from our legal team. He added that Geoff Clark's team assisted with gaining access to properties.

7. Meeting Date for 2025 / 2026

The Chair referred to the meeting date for 2025 / 2026 as follows:

- 11 December 2025 (venue to be confirmed)
- 26 March 2026 (venue to be confirmed)

8. Closing

There being no further business to discuss, the Chair thanked everyone for attending the meeting.

The meeting ended at 3.48pm.

Housing Engagement Board

Minutes of the Quarterly Meeting

held on Monday, 27 October 2025

from 2pm to 4pm

in the Monkfield Room, South Cambridgeshire Hall, Cambourne

Attendees: Vivienne Till (Elected Tenant Representative) – Vice-Chair

Cllr Eileen Wilson (on-line)

Cllr Heather Williams

Peter Campbell (SCDC – Head of Housing)

Jim Watson (Elected Tenant Representative)

Margaret Wilson (Elected Tenant Representative)

Michael Luffman (Elected Tenant Representative)

Patti Hall (Elected Residential Leaseholder Representative) (on-line)

By Invitation: Ivor Grant (Tenant Volunteer)

Jordan Till (Tenant Volunteer – Observer)

Julie Fletcher (SCDC – Service Manager – Housing Strategy)

Eddie Spicer (SCDC – Service Manager – Housing Assets) (on-line)

Dave Armitage (SCDC – Resident Involvement Team Leader)

Bronwen Taylor (SCDC – Resident Involvement Officer) – Minute taker

Apologies: Cllr John Batchelor – Chair

Amy Stock (Elected Tenant Representative) (no apology received)

Jim Watson (Elected Tenant Representative) (no apology received)

Laura Nelson (Elected Tenant Representative)

Geoff Clark (SCDC – Service Manager – Tenancy and Estates)

1. Welcome and Apologies

As Cllr John Batchelor, the Chair, had tendered his apologies, Vivienne Till, the Vice-Chair chaired the meeting. She welcomed everyone to the meeting at 2.05pm.

The Vice-Chair advised that the meeting would be recorded for the purposes of minute taking.

2. Quorum

The meeting was quorate.

3. Endorsement of Policies

Julie Fletcher presented a flow chart on the policy development process, which was as follows:

- Drafting / updating the policy by service managers and relevant officers
- Review by the Policy and Procedure Tenant Panel
- Feedback incorporated and presented to the Leadership Team
- Presented to the Housing Engagement Board for endorsement
- Final approval sought from Cabinet

Julie Fletcher said that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee may review the policies, if it was deemed necessary, and that policies were subject to call-in by councillors which required support from five members.

Peter Campbell advised that the following policies were to be endorsed prior going to Cabinet for approval on 2 December 2025.

- Gas Safety and Servicing Policy
- Electrical Management Policy
- Water Hygiene Policy
- Assignment and Succession Policy

Peter Campbell referred to the following documents:

- Report to the Housing Engagement Board in respect of the Gas Safety and Servicing, Electrical Management, and Water Hygiene Policies
- Appendix D – Feedback Report from Housing Policy and Procedure Tenants Panel in respect of the Gas Safety and Servicing, Electrical Management, and Water Hygiene Policies.

It was further noted that for future HEB meetings, changes to the policies following consultation with the tenant policy panel would be highlighted by way of track changes so that HEB could easily see what changes had been made.

3.1 Gas Safety and Servicing Policy

Eddie Spicer referred to the Gas Safety and Servicing Policy enclosed and advised that the policy ensured that we met all the regulatory requirements.

Peter Campbell referred to the comments report on pages six to 10 in the agenda pack and said that changes requested by tenant volunteers were made to the policies where applicable.

Margaret Wilson referred to page eight, point 2.4 and said that there had been a discussion about the wording, and she understood that inspections could not be done retrospectively as the leases were set, however, she said they should be mandatory.

Patti Hall said that for the past 14 years she had had gas safety servicing done annually and the reports were sent to Chris Brown.

Cllr Williams said that she understood that they could not be done retrospectively and asked why it could not be enforced.

Eddie Spicer said that we do contact all leaseholders and shared ownership tenants every year to remind them to get a service done and to send us a copy of the reports. He added that there was not an obligation that they need to do it unless it was in their lease.

Cllr Williams referred to page six, point 4.7 of the gas safety feedback document and said that the wording in the policy says that SCDC would also check any carbon monoxide detectors. She said the use the word “any” suggested that some properties may not have them.

Eddie Spicer said all houses that had gas appliances would have them and those houses that only had electric appliances would not. He added that the word “any” referred to more than one detector in a property and the wording has been amended within the policy at 4.1.

Cllr Williams referred to page six, point 3.0, “service standards in the near future for each of the health and safety policies” and asked when they could be expected.

Eddie Spicer said that he was currently working on the documents and that they would be ready by March 2026 and the wording has been amended to the feedback document for clarification.

Cllr Williams referred to page seven, point 4.7 and asked if tenants emergency guidance was available to tenants.

Eddie Spicer said that the emergency phone number had been included in point 1.4 of the policy.

Julie Fletcher advised that both the Ombudsman and the Local Government Ombudsman advised that a Council should only have one Complaints policy. She referred to the Council's Complaints Policy and Housing's Complaints Policy and said that they were similar, however, we were making sure that they were aligned. She added that each department had a Complaints Officer.

Peter Campbell said that the Complaints policy was not to be used to report faults.

Eddie Spicer referred to point 8.1 in the policy and said that the policy would be reviewed every five years, unless legislation required changes to be made.

Cllr Williams said she would like to know why tenants did not feel that five years was appropriate.

Margaret Wilson said that she agreed with Eddie Spicer however it needed to be recorded that the policy would be looked at when any legislation changes were made. She added that the Council was proactive when new legislation was introduced.

Cllr Williams asked for this point to be included in the report to Cabinet.

Julie Fletcher said she would include it in the report.

Cllr Williams referred to the "Gas Safety" leaflet referred to on page 8 of the agenda pack and asked if it was published on the website.

Eddie Spicer said that one was included in the tenancy packs given to new tenants.

A discussion was held on the visibility of the contact information.

Eddie Spicer said that a sticker was placed on the boiler that recorded when it was last serviced with the number to call in emergencies.

Ivor Grant said that the emergency numbers were included on the back page of the tenants' handbook.

Cllr Williams asked if tenants received regular updates on the information.

Peter Campbell asked Bronwen Taylor to look into what information was online and to provide an update.

Cllr Williams referred to page 10, reference 2.5 and asked how contractors proved that they met our health and safety standards.

Peter Campbell said it was referred to in point 2.5 of the policy.

Eddie Spicer confirmed that it fell under our operations and contracts procedures. He said we ensured that contractors were trained and this was maintained and reviewed regularly.

Peter Campbell said that the word “demonstrate” would be added to point 2.5 of the policy.

Eddie Spicer said that showing identification was standard procedure.

Peter Campbell said we would include an article about contractors producing identification in the next newsletter to tenants.

Margaret Wilson referred to page 10, reference General and said that it was requested that the word “void” be removed and an alternate word be used. She said that it was still reflected in point 4.4 of the policy.

Peter Campbell said that it was used in the sector as it was considered a technical term to define the period between the property being vacated and relet.

A discussion was held on what word was suitable to replace the word “void”.

Peter Campbell asked Dave Armitage to ask Tpas what the accepted word was.

Cllr Williams asked for the change to be implemented before the policy was presented to Cabinet.

Margaret Wilson referred to point 2.2 in the policy and asked for the word “aims” to be amended as she said this word was a bit vague.

Cllr Williams suggested using the word “will” as it had the caveat of “as far as is reasonably practicable” at the end so the double caveat was not necessary.

Peter Campbell said that he disagreed with this suggestion as the next sentence referred to the steps to be taken to protect. He agreed that it did not need the double caveat and that the word “reasonably” was to be removed.

Action: Julie Fletcher, Bronwen Taylor and Dave Armitage

A copy of the amended policy and gas safety feedback document have been amended following the meeting and attached to the minutes for reference. (Changes highlighted by way of track changes).

3.2 Electrical Management Policy

It was noted that there were new electrical safety regulations coming into force from 1 November 2025 and therefore Peter Campbell recommended that the policy be deferred to ensure that it is fully compliant with the new regulations.

Margaret Wilson seconded the recommendation.

The Electrical Management Policy will therefore be brought to the next Housing Engagement Board following further review.

3.3 Water Hygiene Policy

Eddie Spicer referred to the Water Hygiene Policy enclosed and advised that this policy mainly affected the communal rooms and buildings, and not individual properties unless there was a shared water supply. He said that the policy was to ensure that we were meeting the requirements of the water safety regulations, primarily Legionella.

Cllr Williams referred to page 18, reference 8.1 and asked for a link to be provided to report a repair. This will be included within the policy.

Cllr Williams referred to page 18, reference 9.1 – Risk Assessments on homes.

Eddie Spicer said that risk assessments were only applicable to communal rooms and buildings and not to domestic dwellings. He added that points 5.1 and 5.9 in the policy had been added for clarity but wording would be reviewed.

Cllr Williams said that page 40, point 2.2 also referred to “residential” buildings. The policy would be reviewed for further clarification.

Cllr Williams also referred to page 18, reference 14.1, the complaints page.

Peter Campbell explained that all complaints were handled as per the Council-wide Complaints Policy which was set out in point 15.1 of the policy.

Action: Julie Fletcher

A copy of the amended policy and water hygiene feedback document have been amended following the meeting and attached to the minutes for reference. (Changes highlighted by way of track changes).

3.4 Assignment and Succession Policy

Julie Fletcher advised that as Geoff Clark was unable to attend the meeting, Peter Campbell would provide feedback.

Peter Campbell referred to the following documents enclosed.

- Report to the Housing Engagement Board

- Annexure A – Draft Assignment and Succession Policy
- Annexure B – Feedback Report from Housing Policy and Procedure Tenants Panel

Peter Campbell referred to the policy and said the following amendments were to be made:

- page 57, point 3.9 would be added to the policy to include a warning to fraud
- page 60, point 8.3 – last sentence on the page – the words “elsewhere withing the district” would be removed
- page 64, point 13. – the heading – Non-statutory Successors would be amended to add more clarity
- page 65, points 13.2 and 13.3, the wording would be amended to add more clarity.

Cllr Williams referred to page 70, Appendix B, Reference General, regarding “how assignment and succession rights are affected during a mutual exchange” and asked for this to be included in the policy.

Peter Campbell said the wording would be reviewed (paragraph 6.5) of the policy to make it clear.

Action: Julie Fletcher

A copy of the amended policy and Assignment and Succession feedback document have been amended following the meeting and attached to the minutes for reference. (Changes highlighted by way of track changes).

4. Closing

There being no further business to discuss, the Vice-Chair thanked everyone for attending the meeting.

The meeting ended at 3.42pm.

3.1 Matters Arising from the Meeting held on 25 September 2025

Item	Officer / s	Action	Report Back
4.4	Bronwen Taylor	As the Anti-Racism Charter anniversary event was being held on the 29 October 2025, an alternative date for the Special HEB Meeting is to be looked into.	The special meeting was held on 27 October 2025. For noting.
4.5	Gina Manderson	A copy of last year's Annual Report to Tenants and Leaseholders is to be emailed to the board for feedback.	A link to last year's report was emailed on 3 October 2025. Copies of the 2024 – 2025 annual report were posted to all tenants and leaseholders on 9 December 2025. For noting.
6.1	Geoff Clark	To check with the officer on how many grounds maintenance maps have been updated.	Five grounds maintenance maps have been updated in the last year. For noting.

4. New Matters

4.1 Endorsement of Policies

The following policies are to be endorsed by the board before being presented to Cabinet on 24 March 2026.

- Draft Electrical Management Policy
- Draft Tenancy Sustainment and Support Policy
- Draft Reaching Every Tenant Policy

Included in the pack are the following documents:

- Report to HEB – Draft Electrical Management Policy
 - Annexure A – Draft Electrical Management Policy
 - Annexure B – Electrical Management Policy – Tenant Feedback
- Report to HEB – Draft Tenancy Sustainment and Support Policy and Draft Reaching Every Tenant Policy
 - Appendix A – Draft Tenancy Sustainment and Support Policy
 - Appendix B – Tenancy Sustainment and Support Policy – Tenant Feedback
 - Appendix C – Draft Reaching Every Tenant Policy
 - Appendix D – Reaching Every Tenant Policy – Tenant Feedback



Report to:	Housing Engagement Board 15 January 2026
Lead Cabinet Member:	Councillor John Batchelor – Lead Member for Housing
Lead Officer:	Peter Campbell – Head of Housing
Key Decision:	Yes The key decision was first published in the October 2025 Forward Plan for Cabinet

Draft Electrical Management Policy (Housing)

Recommendations

1. It is recommended that the Housing Engagement Board endorses the Draft Electrical Management Policy (Housing), as outlined in Appendix A, ahead of its submission to Cabinet for approval on 24 March 2026.

Details

2. The Social Housing Regulation Act 2023 introduces strengthened Consumer Standards that place a statutory duty on social housing providers to ensure tenant safety and wellbeing. Key health and safety-related provisions include:

- Safety and Quality Standard: Providers must ensure homes are safe, decent, and legally compliant with health and safety regulations.
- Health and Safety Lead: Each provider must appoint a designated lead responsible for monitoring compliance, assessing risks, and advising on remedial actions.
- Timely Risk Management: Providers are required to act promptly on health and safety assessments and mitigate risks within appropriate timescales.
- Awaab's Law: Introduced to enforce timely investigation and resolution of serious hazards.

3. The Regulator of Social Housing now has enhanced powers to inspect, enforce compliance, and impose penalties where standards are not met. These changes aim to improve tenant outcomes and restore confidence in the sector's ability to provide safe, secure housing.

4. The Council is therefore in the process of reviewing all of its processes and policies to ensure that we are fully compliant with the Consumer Standards in relation to health and safety of our tenants and that we are meeting our obligations as a landlord.
5. As from 1 November 2025, the Electrical Safety Standards in the Social Rented Sector (England) Regulations 2025 came into force. The main changes include:
 - Five-Year Electrical Inspections: All social housing properties must undergo Electrical Installation Condition Reports (EICRs) at least every five years.
 - Appliance Testing: Portable Appliance Testing (PAT) is now required for all landlord-supplied electrical appliances.
 - Certification and Reporting: EICRs must be provided to tenants within 28 days of inspection and before new tenancies commence. Full compliance for existing tenancies is required by May 2026.
 - Remedial Action: Repairs identified during inspections must be completed within 28 days, with emergency hazards addressed within 24 hours.
 - Scope and Alignment: These regulations bring social housing in line with private sector standards and strengthen tenant safety obligations.
6. The Council has historically maintained a strong commitment to health and safety, carrying out five-yearly electrical inspections as best practice before these became a legal requirement. Building on this robust foundation, the proposed draft policy establishes a comprehensive framework for ensuring tenant safety. It is fully aligned with statutory technical standards mandated by law, including the recently introduced Electrical Safety Standards in the Social Rented Sector (England) Regulations 2025.
7. If approved, this policy will be reviewed again in five years' time. However, earlier review may be required following tenant feedback, further guidance or where there are changes in operations and / or legislation.

Reasons for Recommendations

8. It is a requirement that the Council has robust policies in place demonstrating how we comply with the safety requirements around electrical management. This policy will form part of a suite of policies that set out the Council's approach to the health and safety of our tenants.

Options

9. The alternative option would be to reject the draft Electrical Management Policy (Housing) in its presented form. However, without an approved policy the Council would not be able to demonstrate that it is meeting the requirements of the new Consumer Standards or the Electrical Safety Standards in the Social Rented Sector (England) Regulations 2025.

Implications

10. In the writing of this report, taking into account financial, legal, staffing, risk, equality and diversity, climate change, and any other key issues, the following implications have been considered:-

Financial and Fraud Impact

11. None.

Legal

12. Having comprehensive policies in place as to the Council's approach to health and safety for our tenants demonstrates how we are meeting our legal obligations as a landlord.

Staffing

13. As part of the implementation of the Consumer Standards there are additional burdens placed on the Council in terms of extra staffing resources to ensure full compliance, with robust documentation and monitoring. Additional resource has been identified to support this work within existing budgets.

Risks / Opportunities

14. Non-compliance of housing stock in terms of health and safety following the introduction of the Social Housing Regulations 2023 and subsequent standards is monitored as a risk on the risk register.

Consultation Responses

15. The draft Electrical Management Policy (Housing) has been reviewed by the Housing Policy and Procedure Tenant Panel on 3 September 2025. The panel, comprising tenant representatives and officers, provided feedback, which was duly considered, and any necessary amendments were incorporated into the draft policy. A copy of the amendments made following the consultation through the Tenant Panel is attached at Appendix B.

16. Further amendments have been incorporated into the draft policy (shown as track changes) to reflect the requirements of the Electrical Safety Standards in the Social Rented Sector (England) Regulations 2025.

Alignment with Council Priority Areas

Healthy and Supported Communities

17. The draft policy aims to support the health and safety of those living in our council properties.

Sustainable Homes and Vibrant Places

18. The draft policy aims to ensure that our council homes are safe and sustainable into the future.

Appendices

Appendix A: Draft Electrical Management Policy (Housing)

Appendix B: Feedback from the Policy and Procedure Panel

Report Authors:

Eddie Spicer – Service Manager – Housing Assets

Julie Fletcher – Service Manager – Housing Strategy

Telephone: (01954) 713 352



Appendix A

South Cambridgeshire District Council Electrical Management Policy (Housing)

Version	Draft (v0.5)
Ownership	Head of Housing
Approved by	Cabinet
Policy Contact	Service Manager – Housing Assets
Approval Date	TBC
Publication Date	TBC
Date of Next Review	TBC



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DRAFT



1. Introduction

- 1.1 South Cambridgeshire District Council (SCDC) is committed to ensuring that our tenant's homes and our communal areas are safe and secure places to live and work.
- 1.2 We will fulfil our responsibilities as the responsible person under all relevant legislation and statutory codes of practice and guidance. This includes, but is not limited to, the following:
 - [The Building Regulations 2010](#)
 - [Approved Document P - Electrical safety in dwellings](#)
 - British Standard 7671:2018, as amended (IET Wiring Regulations)
 - The Code of Practice for In-Service Inspection and Testing of Electrical Equipment
 - [The Electricity at Work Regulations 1989](#)
 - [The Landlord and Tenant Act 1985](#)
 - [Housing Act 2004](#)
 - [The Electrical Equipment \(Safety\) Regulations 1994](#)
 - [Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation \(England\) Regulations 2006](#)
 - [Health and Safety at Work Act 1974](#)
 - [Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999](#)
 - [The Hazards in Social Housing \(Prescribed Requirements\) \(England\) Regulations 2025 – Part 4 and Part 5](#)
 - Electrical Safety Standards in the Social Rented Sector (England) Regulations 2025
 - Awaab's Law requirements for hazard response
- 1.3 We address these responsibilities through:
 - The provision of suitable, sufficient and risk appropriate electrical precautions.
 - Ongoing and continuous risk assessment.
 - Delivering our individual and collective duties, as required by the regulations.
 - Monitoring and challenging our own performance.

2. Scope and Purpose

- 2.1 SCDC are required by law to ensure that electrical installations and wiring in our housing stock is safe when tenants move into our properties and that they are maintained in a safe condition throughout the duration of the tenancy. We will take all reasonable steps to prevent and control the risk from electricity in the properties that we own.



- 2.2 This policy sets out how we will comply with statutory electrical safety duties, including inspection, testing and communication requirements.
- 2.3 This policy applies to all residential and communal buildings owned and managed by SCDC. This does not include leasehold, equity share or shared ownership properties (unless stated within the lease agreement) or properties managed by Ermine Street Housing or Shire Homes Lettings, as they have their own policies.

3. Management of Properties (electrical installations)

- 3.1 SCDC will inspect all electrical installations in both our residential properties, communal buildings and landlord supplies to ensure that electrical safety standards are met. The standards that should be met are set out in British Standard 7671, also known as the 18th edition of the Wiring Regulations
- 3.2 As from 1 November 2025 it is a regulatory requirement that Electrical Installation Condition Reports (EICR) are carried out at least every five years for all new tenancies, with a phased roll out for existing tenants of May 2026, with full compliance by November 2026.
- 3.3 Inspections will be carried out by a qualified engineer at least once every five years, or more frequently where risk assessments suggest that it is appropriate. EICRs will give the results of the test and set a date for the next inspection.
- 3.4 Copies of the report will be provided to the tenant within 28 days of the inspection. For new tenants, a copy of the report will be given prior to occupation of the property. From 1 May 2026, copies of EICRs will be provided to all existing tenants even if the EICR predates this.3.3. A full electrical inspection and test will be carried out whenever we regain possession of a property, such as at the end of a tenancy. This includes when the property is vacant, when new tenants are to move in, or when a mutual exchange takes place. We may also carry out inspections in response to tenant's concerns, or if we are aware that a tenant has made unauthorised alterations to their home or where a risk assessment (HHSRS) identifies a need.
- 3.5 The inspection process includes the completion of an EICR to confirm the electrical installation is safe for continued use. Any remedial work which is required to make the electrical installations safe will be undertaken immediately.
- 3.6 If a property is newly constructed or has undergone a complete rewire, an Electrical Installation Certificate (EIC) will be issued. In these cases, a copy of the EIC will be



provided to the tenant when the tenancy starts, and no further inspection will be required for a period of five years from the date of issue of the certificate.

3.7 **Portable Appliance Testing (PAT):** Landlord-supplied appliances provided as part of the tenancy, such as cookers, fridges or microwaves, will be tested at least every 5 years or more frequently based on risk in accordance with regulatory requirements. Checks will be carried out regardless of the age of the equipment. Where the equipment is identified as unsafe, it will be taken out of use immediately and a repair or replacement will be arranged within 28 days. If the premises are not occupied under a tenancy, the equipment will be replaced or made safe before the tenancy commences.

3.8 Tenants are responsible for ensuring that any electrical equipment they own is safe for use. Such equipment falls outside the scope of this policy.

3.9 Testing of portable and fixed appliances within communal areas will be tested annually.

4. Responsibilities

4.1 SCDC's responsibilities include:

- Compliance with all relevant legislation
- Complete 5-year periodic electrical test for all residential properties, blocks and communal areas (or more frequently if recommended)
- Use all recognised routes including, where necessary, taking legal action to gain access to obtain a compliant report.
- Undertake electrical testing at change of tenancy.
- Test portable and fixed appliances within communal areas annually.
- Maintain accurate asset information.
- Have competent, skilled, and well-trained staff internally at SCDC.
- Ensure all operatives used by our main contractors completing the electrical works have all necessary and relevant qualifications.
- Seek independent assurance and challenge on our performance (third party inspection on 10% of all electrical work, on a quarterly basis).
- Report on our performance about electrical safety to Managers and Members as part of our compliance monitoring.



4.2 SCDC will appoint a responsible person to ensure that the commitments in this policy are carried out as well as the actions identified in the risk assessments – see management structure below:

Duty Holder: Head of Housing

Has ultimate accountability for electrical management.

Responsible Person: Service Manager – Housing Assets

Oversees the overall implementation of this policy.

Deputy Responsible Person: Asset and Compliance Manager

Supports the responsible person in the day-to-day management of this policy.

4.3 Where contractors carry out risk assessments, works or checks on our behalf, they will be required to meet our health and safety standards and be appropriately qualified and accredited.

5. Accessibility and Inclusion

5.1 SCDC is committed to engaging with tenants and residents in line with the [Equality Act 2010](#). Reasonable adjustments will be made to ensure services are accessible to all.

This may include:

- Contact preferences
- Offering home visits
- Use of advocates or interpreters
- Alternative communication formats, such as large print or translated materials
- Adjusting appointment times
- Adjusting locations to accommodate mobility or health needs

6. About this Policy

6.1 This policy will be reviewed every five years. However, earlier reassessment may be required following tenant feedback, further guidance or where there are changes in operations and / or legislation.

6.2 This policy has been produced in consultation with tenant representatives. If you are interested in getting involved in shaping our housing service, we would love to hear from you; please visit our website for more information and to get in touch.





7. Service Requests and Complaints Process

7.1 Tenants should report initial service requests, such as repairs or safety concerns, through the designated channels:

Repairs: [Online](#) via the Council's website

By phone via the Repairs Hotline: 0800 0851 313

General Queries: **By phone** – 01954 713 000

Email – duty.housing@scambs.gov.uk

The [Communications Charter for tenants and leaseholders](#) sets out detailed guidance on how to contact the Council and the service standards that can be expected in relation to communication and responsiveness.

7.2 SCDC aims to provide excellent customer service, but we recognise that mistakes can happen. If you are dissatisfied with the service you have received following a service request, you can make a complaint in accordance with the Council's Complaints Policy. To make a complaint, please visit our [website](#) or telephone 01954 713 000 or email housing.complaints@scambs.gov.uk.

8. Our Values

Ambitious

We are proactive and take a forward-thinking approach to addressing challenges.

We create smart solutions and reach our goals with determination and a clear vision.

Collaborative

We foster a culture of teamwork and open communication.

We work with and involve stakeholders, to improve how the organisation works and serves the public.

Compassionate

We prioritise empathy and understanding in decision-making and service delivery.

We consider the wellbeing of people and communities in everything we do and we replicate this when we talk to our colleagues because we know that when we support each other, we all do better.



Accountable

We take responsibility for our actions and decisions.

We own up to mistakes and make sure we fulfil our commitments.

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Appendix B: Electrical Management Policy – Feedback from Tenant Reps (3 September 2025)

Reference	Notes	Response	Place and Notes	Updated Reference
1.2	Wording of committed to delivering. Currently it reads: “ <i>We are committed to delivering our responsibilities...</i> ”	Amended	We will re-word this to read “ <i>We will fulfil our responsibilities...</i> ”	1.2
1.3	<p>It was noted in the section below that “<i>Delivering our individual and collective duties</i>” may be a bit vague?</p> <p>We address these responsibilities through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The provision of suitable, sufficient and risk appropriate electrical precautions. • Ongoing and continuous risk assessment. • Delivering our individual and collective duties. • Monitoring and challenging our own performance. 	Amended	Wording amended to ‘ <i>as required by the regulations</i> ’ alongside the ‘ <i>delivering our individual and collective duties</i> ’.	1.3
2.1	<p>“We will take all reasonable steps” – Vague communication vs specific enforceable promises. Both lines from section 1.3 and 2.1 are subjective and difficult to enforce. A tenant cannot hold the council to a vague standard. What the council deems “reasonable” may not be what a tenant needs for safety.</p> <p>Replace vague language with absolute commitments such as: “We will ensure all electrical installations are safe and compliant with BS7671 (the UK’s national standard for the safety of electrical installation and wiring) at the start of every tenancy and maintained in this condition throughout. This removes ambiguity.</p>	No change	<p>The term “reasonable steps” is taken directly from the Regulations, which set the legal requirements we must comply with.</p> <p>Using the exact wording is essential to maintain consistency with the statutory framework and to avoid any ambiguity that could lead to misinterpretation or non-compliance. For these reasons, no further changes are proposed.</p>	-

Reference	Notes	Response	Place and Notes	Updated Reference
2.3	“residential and communal buildings” – Be more specific in section 2.3 about exactly what type of stock this policy applies to. For example: houses, flats, bungalows, maisonettes, sheltered and supported housing schemes as well as temporary accommodation owned by SCDS.	No change	The policy states that it applies to all residential and communal buildings owned and managed by SCDC (anything that has an electrical supply). The wording ‘all’ will encompass all property types for both residential and communal buildings.	N / A
2.3	Does this include Leasehold / Equity Share? If not, should that be stated?	Amended	Wording amended at 2.3 – <i>This does not include leasehold, equity share or shared ownership properties</i>	2.3
3.2	Sending copies of the new certificate after the testing?	Amended	Additional paragraph added at 3.3 aligning with the new requirements of the Electrical Safety Standards in the Social Rented Sector (England) Regulations 2025.	3.3
3.3	Void phrase usage.	Amended	Amended to ‘vacant’.	3.3
3.3	<i>“Undertake electrical testing at change of tenancy”.</i> Does this include Leasehold / Equity Share?	Amended	Not applicable – see amendments to 2.3.	N / A

Reference	Notes	Response	Place and Notes	Updated Reference
3.4	<p>In section 3.4 there is a critical lack of response times for remedial work. A C1 (Danger present) fault means there is an immediate risk of injury or fire. Allowing up to 30 days is simply unacceptable and puts tenants at severe risk. This timeframe prioritises council logistics over tenant safety. There is also another level C3 which is omitted and should be included.</p> <p>Include a comprehensive guide of faults by grade and with examples of what those look like (C1, C2, C3 & FI) and implement a graded response system. For example: C1 (Danger present): work to be made safe within 24 hrs of the fault being reported, while not impacting on people's everyday activities (example, isolation of the circuit), with permanent repair within 5 working days. C2 (Potentially dangerous): Remedial work completed within 5 working days of fault being reported. C3 (Improvement recommended) & FI (Further investigation): Addressed and fixed within 28 days.</p>	Amended	<p>This has since been updated to align with the new requirements of the Electrical Safety Standards in the Social Rented Sector (England) Regulations 2025 and reworded for greater clarity.</p> <p>Links included within the policy to the relevant legislation relating to The Hazards in Social Housing (Prescribed Requirements) (England) Regulations 2025 – Part 4 and Part 5.</p>	3.4
3.6	<p><i>“Test our portable appliances within communal areas according to a usage; between 24 and 48 months”.</i></p> <p>Is this worded correctly?</p>	Amended	Additional paragraph added at 3.6 for clarity.	3.6

Reference	Notes	Response	Place and Notes	Updated Reference
4.1	<p>States that the council will use “legal action to gain access”. While in some instances this may be necessary, the tone is adversarial. There is no mention of fair and flexible arrangements to accommodate tenants (example, evening / weekend appointments for working tenants). Tenants may feel pressured and inconvenienced, potentially leading to resistance. The process should be reframed as a collaboration for safety, not an enforcement action.</p> <p>Frame access as a shared goal and add a commitment: “We will work flexibly with tenants to agree on mutually convenient appointment times, including out of hours options where possible to carry out these essential safety checks.</p>	General Comment	<p>As part of the booking process, the tenant is able to choose the appointment slot(s) and they can facilitate flexible appointments as part of this process too. The property services section is looking to put together service standards for each of the health and safety policies. These will cover the aspects mentioned here, and it is felt that the service standards will be the best place for them to be included, as opposed to the policy document itself.</p> <p>Flexibility for appointments mentioned under Section 5. However the policy needs to be clear that the Council has a duty to ensure properties are safe and that in some circumstances we may have to take legal action to gain access to obtain a compliant report.</p>	N / A

Reference	Notes	Response	Place and Notes	Updated Reference
4.1	<p>“Report on our performance about electrical safety to Managers and Board Members” – There is a lack of transparency and communication and there is no commitment to sharing this information with tenants. Tenants have no way of knowing the council is actually meeting its targets (example, EICR completion rates, compliance rates). This lack of transparency protects the council from scrutiny.</p> <p>Commit to annual public reporting of KPIs: percentage of properties with a valid in date EICR, compliance rates with response time targets for C1,C2, C3 & FI faults and number of electrical related incidents. Publish this and make it easily accessible on the council’s website and in the tenant newsletter. This holds the council publicly accountable.</p>	General Comment	<p>Performance is reported to the TSM / KPI Tenant Panel and to Cabinet on a quarterly basis.</p> <p>Also included in the Annual Report / Tenant Newsletter, and on our website.</p> <p>We are currently in the process of reviewing performance measures and how / where they are reported which will be implemented for the new financial year 2026 / 2027.</p>	N / A
4.1	<p><i>“Seek independent assurance and challenge on our performance”.</i></p> <p><i>“Report on our performance about electrical safety to Managers and Board Members”.</i></p> <p>Is this regular / routine?</p>	Amended	<p>Third party inspections are completed on 10% of all electrical work, on a quarterly basis.</p> <p>New performance measure to be introduced for 2026 / 2027 following implementation of new regulations.</p>	4.1

Reference	Notes	Response	Place and Notes	Updated Reference
General	<p>In addition to the above the policy does not include anything about tenant-owned electrical appliances, which are a major fire risk. There is no commitment to educate tenants on electrical safety (example, overloading sockets, PAT testing etcetera). Tenants, especially vulnerable ones may unknowingly create dangerous situations, and the council has a moral duty to educate them, not just to maintain its own assets.</p> <p>Add a new section “Tenant Training and Support” where the council commits to providing all new tenants with a clear and easy to read guide on electrical safety including the dangers of daisy chaining extensions, using counterfeit or untested chargers and how to report faults. This empowers tenants to be partners in their own safety.</p>	Amended	<p>The policy outlines our approach to electrical management and to how we aim to ensure that we meet our obligations as a landlord, so it was felt that the policy document itself may not be the appropriate place to include this level of advice and detail.</p> <p>Information on this subject is available on the website. Will look to promote through the tenant newsletter. Featured campaign in the latest Annual Tenant Report relating to electrical safety.</p> <p>Additional paragraph added at 3.6 for clarity.</p>	3.6
General	Overall impressions: strong on legal compliance and internal management structure but it is weak on specific, actionable tenant safeguards, transparency and empowerment. It reads more like a procedural internal document designed to protect the council from liability rather than a user-friendly charter designed to actively protect tenants.	General Comment	The policy is not designed to be advice for tenants, rather it is setting out our approach to electrical management and to explain how we aim to ensure that we meet our obligations as a landlord.	N / A
General	General wording feedback and proof-reading notes.	General Comment	As an overall note, all feedback has been considered and wording and general proof-reading observations have been reviewed and revised, where appropriate.	General



Report to:	Housing Engagement Board 15 January 2026
Lead Cabinet Member:	Councillor John Batchelor – Lead Member for Housing
Lead Officer:	Peter Campbell – Head of Housing
Key Decision:	Yes The key decision was first published in the October 2025 Forward Plan for Cabinet

Tenancy Sustainment and Support Policy and Reaching Every Tenant Policy

Recommendations

1. It is recommended that the Housing Engagement Board endorses the Draft Tenancy Sustainment and Support Policy (Appendix A) and the Draft Reaching Every Tenant Policy (Appendix C), ahead of its submission to Cabinet for approval on 24 March 2026.

Details

2. South Cambridgeshire District Council is committed to delivering an inclusive, person-centred housing service that ensures all tenants receive appropriate support to maintain successful tenancies. These policies have been developed in response to evolving tenant needs and to meet regulatory requirements under the Social Housing (Regulations) Act 2023 and associated Consumer Standards.

3. The Tenancy Sustainment and Support Policy aims to prevent tenancy breakdown and homelessness through early intervention, practical assistance and tailored support. The framework brings together existing services promoting independent living and stable communities. Support includes:

- Pre-tenancy support – help with forms and setting up utilities.
- Introductory tenancies – providing guidance and support during the first 12 months of a new tenancy.
- Specialised support – income maximisation, benefits advice and assistance to address challenges such as anti-social behaviour, hoarding or mental health needs.

- Visiting Support Service – for residents aged 65+, offering financial and tenancy management support, as well as signposting to health and social support services.

4. The Reaching Every Tenant Policy ensures that no tenant is overlooked by proactively identifying households who may face barriers to engagement. The policy sets out how the Council will identify and engage with tenants using data insights and indicators such as rent arrears, missed appointments or lack of repairs, to flag potential risks early. Taking a pro-active approach will improve tenant engagement and reduce the risk of harm and exclusion.
5. The Housing Service is currently gathering tenant data on household composition, including details of any disabilities, language needs, and preferred methods of contact. All tenants will have been contacted by the end of January 2026, and reminders will be issued to non-responders by March 2026 to complete the household form. This information will support us to identify tenants who have had no contact with the service over the past year, so they can be prioritised for a visit during 2026.
6. As the quality and breadth of our data improves, we will enhance our ability to cross-reference datasets, enabling us to deliver more targeted and effective services to specific tenant groups, including the provision of tenancy support.

Reasons for Recommendations

7. Clear, robust policies demonstrate how the Council meets its legal obligations as a landlord while embedding a structured, supportive approach to tenancy management. The policies will enhance customer service standards, help tenants avoid enforcement through proactive engagement, help to improve satisfaction measures and contribute to a positive regulatory assessment.

Options

8. The alternative option would be to reject the policies in their presented form. However, without approved and up to date policies, the Council would lack a clear framework for fulfilling its landlord responsibilities in this area, risk inconsistent practice and reduce our ability to evidence compliance and positive outcomes.

Implications

9. In the writing of this report, taking into account financial, legal, staffing, risk, equality and diversity, climate change, and any other key issues, the following implications have been considered:-

Financial

10. Early, supportive interventions can reduce avoidable costs by improving tenancy sustainment, minimising enforcement and preventing homelessness. Clear processes enhance efficiency and help target resources where they have the greatest impact.

Legal

- Both policies support the Council in meeting its obligations under the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023, including the Consumer Standards. They clarify roles, responsibilities and routes to support, strengthening governance, accountability and compliance.

Risks / Opportunities

11. These policies enable proactive, tailored support that empowers tenants to manage their homes confidently, strengthens trust and inclusion, and prevents small issues from escalating into crises. By promoting early intervention and practical assistance, such as income maximisation and mental health support, they help sustain tenancies, reduce homelessness and deliver better outcomes for residents and the Council, fostering resilient communities and improving service quality.

Equality and Diversity

12. The policies actively promote equality, diversity and inclusion by committing to person-centred support and accessible communication. They recognise the different needs across age, disability, health, language and cultural backgrounds, and aim to remove barriers to engagement through reasonable adjustments and partnership working.

Health and Wellbeing

13. These policies actively support health and wellbeing by reducing isolation, promoting mental resilience, and connecting tenants to services that enhance physical, emotional and social health.

Consultation Responses

14. Both policies have been reviewed by the Housing Policy and Procedure Panel which consists of tenant representatives and officers. Feedback from the panel has been considered and any amendments have been made (highlighted by way of track-changes) where appropriate – see Appendices B and D for further information.

Alignment with Council Priority Areas

Healthy and Supported Communities

15. Together these policies reduce isolation, improve financial and mental health outcomes and encourage engagement, which are essential for building communities where residents feel supported, included and able to thrive.

Background Papers

Appendices

Appendix A: Draft Tenancy Sustainment and Support Policy

Appendix B: Feedback from the Housing Policy and Procedure Panel

Appendix C: Draft Reaching Every Tenant Policy

Appendix D: Feedback from the Housing Policy and Procedure Panel

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Appendix A

South Cambridgeshire District Council

Tenancy Sustainment and Support Policy (Housing)

Version	Draft (v0.3)
Ownership	Head of Housing
Approved By	Cabinet
Policy Contact	Service Manager – Tenancy & Estates
Approval Date	24 March 2026
Publication Date	1 April 2026
Date of Next Review	March 2029

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1. Introduction

1.1 South Cambridgeshire District Council (SCDC) is committed to providing an effective housing management service and ensuring that tenants have the support they need to sustain their tenancies. This may include:

- Identifying and supporting vulnerable households.
- Working collaboratively with statutory and voluntary sector partners.
- Providing access to tenancy sustainment services.
- Signposting to relevant support agencies.
- Promoting equality, diversity, and inclusion.

2. Scope and Purpose

2.1 This policy outlines SCDC's approach to helping support tenants to successfully maintain their tenancies and fulfil the terms of their tenancy agreement.

2.2 The Tenancy Sustainment and Support policy aims to:

- Prevent homelessness and reduce the likelihood of tenancy breakdowns.
- Promote independent living and stable communities.
- Encourage early intervention and tailored support.
- Align with national legislation and the [Greater Cambridgeshire Housing Strategy \(2024 to 2029\)](#).
- Assist in meeting our responsibilities as outlined in the [Social Housing \(Regulation\) Act 2023](#) and the associated [regulatory standards](#).

2.3 This policy applies to SCDC tenants that hold either an introductory, secure or a fixed term / flexible tenancy. It does not apply to leaseholders, shared owners or non-secure tenants. It also does not apply to properties managed by Ermine Street Housing or Shire Homes Lettings, as they have their own policies.

3. What is Tenancy Sustainment?

3.1 Tenancy sustainment support services are a preventative measure to help reduce the risk of a tenancy from ending prematurely. These services can help tenants keep to the terms of their tenancy, to ensure that they are able to keep their home and can live independently for as long as possible.

3.2 Our goal as a landlord is for our tenants to feel secure, stable, and supported in their homes. As part of this commitment, SCDC can provide support to help tenants to



manage their tenancy successfully and try to avoid issues such as rent arrears, eviction, or homelessness.

3.3 SCDC recognises that people may experience periods of difficulty or personal challenge that can affect their ability to manage and maintain their tenancy. Tenants are encouraged to contact the Council at the earliest opportunity if they feel they may require additional assistance.

3.4 There are risk factors that can contribute to a tenancy ending early which are considered as part of tailoring our support services. These can include (but are not limited to):

- Mental health
- Disabilities
- Learning difficulties
- Financial (low or fluctuating income, unemployment, debt, fuel poverty)
- Addiction (such as drug, alcohol, gambling)
- Domestic abuse
- Safeguarding concerns
- Trauma
- Anti-social behaviour (ASB) and hate crime
- Housing / tenancy history (example, history of rent arrears, homelessness, previous eviction or failed tenancies)
- Leaving care
- Support needs
- Under or over occupation of property
- Hoarding behaviours
- Repair issues or dissatisfaction with property condition
- Other changes to household circumstances (example, lack of available support network, relationship breakdown or bereavement, being new / young parents, difficulties being able to sufficiently furnish property, etcetera.)

4. Tenancy Sustainment Support Services

4.1 We understand that everyone's circumstances are different, and we aim to provide tailored support that empowers tenants to maintain a safe, secure, and sustainable tenancy. Our goal is to work in partnership with tenants, offering practical assistance and guidance wherever it is needed.



- 4.2 SCDC will provide tenancy sustainment and support services either by internal specialist advice or by signposting tenants to external support services.
- 4.3 Some areas that support may be required during a tenancy include (but are not limited to):

Direct Support (provided by our officers)

- Help with understanding and completing forms.
- Assistance in explaining information so tenants understand their rights and responsibilities.
- Help with being able to access online services.
- Budgeting, benefits and household management support.
- Help with starting a new tenancy, for example helping set up utilities or finding furniture.
- Dealing with neighbour disputes or anti-social behaviour.

Dealing with hoarding. Signposting and Referrals (connecting with external services)

- Help with accessing addiction services, mental health charities and connecting people to other external support agencies where relevant.
- Assistance in finding employment, education, training or volunteering opportunities.
- Getting support for health and / or wellbeing

Reasonable Adjustments

- Supporting tenants with disabilities and / or special requirements

5. Our Approach

- 5.1 The type of support a tenant may require will vary, and we will take individual needs into account when offering relevant services. Support can range from short-term help to longer-term assistance, depending on the situation. Services include:

- **Pre-tenancy Support**

Providing support to someone before a tenancy begins, such as help with forms etcetera

- **Short-term Support**

Helping to resolve a particular issue, which doesn't require any on-going support beyond overcoming the initial difficulty.



- **Medium and Long-term Support**

This would be for situations in which a tenant needs longer-term support to help sustain their tenancy.

5.2 New Tenancy Support

All new tenants (other than those transferring or by mutual exchange) are given an 'Introductory' tenancy, which usually lasts 12 months. This period is designed to provide guidance and support, helping tenants settle in and successfully manage their home in line with their tenancy agreement. If there are no issues during this period, a 'Secure' tenancy is offered. Where challenges arise, such as rent arrears or anti-social behaviour, the Council will work closely with the tenant to resolve issues. If difficulties persist, the 'Introductory' tenancy may be extended for up to six months to provide additional time for the tenant to demonstrate they can manage their home. In exceptional cases, further formal action may be necessary, such as serving a 'Notice of Proceedings for Possession' (NOPP). This step is taken as a last resort where persistent breaches of the tenancy agreement remain unresolved despite intervention. The Council's priority is always to work collaboratively with tenants to prevent enforcement wherever possible.

At the beginning of any new tenancy, an SCDC Housing Services Officer (HSO) or Sheltered Estate Officer (SEO) will explain to the tenant their rights and responsibilities and answer any questions that they may have.

During the 'Introductory' tenancy period, HSOs will carry out a 6-week and a 36-week visit with the new tenant to ensure that the tenancy is working well and is on the right track. These visits utilise a preventative approach, allowing the chance to catch problems early before they escalate – example, repair issues or difficulty paying rent.

6-week Visits

This visit takes place at the beginning of the tenancy and its purpose is to:

- Ensure the tenant has settled in well and understand their rights and responsibilities.
- Identify any immediate issues with the property, such as repairs or safety concerns.
- Offer support if the tenant is struggling with budgeting, accessing services, or adapting to their new home.



36-week Visits

This visit focuses on promoting long-term stability. It helps:

- Review how the tenancy is going – are rent payments consistent? Is the property being maintained?
- Spot signs of vulnerability – such as isolation, health issues, or anti-social behaviour.
- Prevent tenancy breakdown by offering tailored support or referrals to other services.

5.3 General Tenancy Support Queries

Housing Services Officers (HSOs) and Sheltered Estate Officers (SEOs) are available to support tenants throughout their tenancy. They will be able to provide initial advice, support tenants with issues, and / or signpost to other services wherever it is required.

5.4 Signposting

Where appropriate, SCDC will signpost tenants to specialist services that could help support them (this could be other Council led services, or external organisations).

Examples of this may include (but are not limited to):

- Citizens Advice
- Food banks
- Low-cost furniture or removals
- Mental health services
- Addiction support services
- Employment support services
- Education support services
- Financial assistance services
- Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP)
- Grants

5.5 Visiting Support Services

SCDC provides visiting support services to all eligible residents living in South Cambridgeshire, not limited to Council tenants. The service is designed to promote independent living and support residents to remain in their own home for as long as possible.



The visiting support service delivers a free, short-term support service to residents aged 65 or over, subject to a needs and risk assessment to determine eligibility.

The visiting support service offers assistance across a range of areas, including:

Financial Support

- Debt management
- Budgeting advice
- Benefit entitlement checks
- Support with completing application forms
- Tenancy management guidance
- Setting up payment plans
- Help with bills

Physical and Mental Health – Signposting Residents to Access Support Services for:

- Personal care
- Help with daily living tasks (for example, cooking, shopping, laundry and gardening)
- Anxiety and depression and memory loss
- Medication management
- Access to healthcare services
- Addressing loneliness and social isolation

Social and Community Support

- Connecting residents to local day centres or social groups
- Access to chair-based exercise classes and leisure activities (such as swimming or walking)
- Signposting to community activities and volunteering opportunities.

Where appropriate, residents may be referred to specialist professionals, such as:

- Occupational therapists to assess and plan home adaptations
- Mobile Wardens to help residents live independently and safely in their own home, and who have a connection to their community

Support also includes advice on personal and home safety.

Whilst the Visiting Support Service is open to those eligible and aged 65 or over, we can signpost people under 65 to other organisations and services for support where required.



6. Mental Health Support for Council Tenants

6.1 SCDC recognises the critical link between mental health and tenancy sustainment. Mental health challenges can significantly impact a tenant's ability to manage their tenancy, engage with services and maintain independent living. As part of its commitment to intervention and holistic support, SCDC integrates mental health provision into its tenancy sustainment framework.

Dedicated Mental Health Support Officer

SCDC employs a Mental Health Support Officer to provide targeted assistance to tenants experiencing emotional or psychological difficulties. This role involves:

- Identifying tenants at risk of tenancy breakdown due to mental health concerns
- Offering direct support and guidance
- Facilitating referrals to appropriate internal and external health services
- Working collaboratively with officers to promote wellbeing and tenancy stability

7. Income Maximisation Services

7.1 SCDC offers money advice to assist tenants in managing their finances effectively, helping them make the most of their money and maintain financial stability.

7.2 Our Housing Advice Team provide affordability assessments, benefit entitlement checks, savings advice and budgeting advice, and can refer tenants to any appropriate services, where required.

7.3 The assistance is tailored to each individual situation and is based upon the information the tenant shares with us.

Tenancy Sustainment Workshops

SCDC offer tenancy sustainment workshops every six to eight weeks. These workshops are designed to support tenants in developing the knowledge and skills necessary to maintain successful tenancies. During these sessions, tenants have the opportunity to engage with specialist staff to discuss:

- Tenant and landlord rights and responsibilities
- Financial obligations associated with holding a tenancy
- Accessing support services and sources of advice
- Other relevant topics aimed at promoting tenancy stability and independence



7.5 Maximising Income through Data-led Support

SCDC utilises the Low-Income Family Tracker (LIFT) software to proactively identify households that are likely to be eligible for welfare benefits but are not currently claiming them. This innovative, data-led approach enables the Council to target support more effectively and improve financial outcomes for residents.

Identified households are contacted through letters or text messages, encouraging them to apply for the benefits they may be entitled to. Where appropriate, follow-up telephone calls are made to offer further guidance and support.

This targeted intervention has resulted in hundreds of South Cambridgeshire residents receiving additional income through successful benefit claims, directly attributable to the Council's advice and support.

SCDC will continue to monitor the effectiveness of the LIFT programme and explore opportunities to expand its use.

8. Accessibility and Inclusion

8.1 SCDC is committed to engaging with tenants and residents in line with the [Equality Act 2010](#). Reasonable adjustments will be made to ensure services are accessible to all. This may include:

- Contact preferences
- Offering home visits
- Use of advocates or interpreters
- Alternative communication formats, such as large print or translated materials
- Adjusting appointment times or locations to accommodate mobility or health needs

9. Referrals

9.1 In the first instance, tenants should contact their Housing Services Officer (HSO) or Sheltered Estate Officer (SEO). These Officers can provide initial advice and where appropriate direct queries to the relevant officer or service.

9.2 Residents living in South Cambridgeshire can self-refer to the Visiting Support Service [online](#) or by telephoning 01954 713 000. Referrals can also be made by other council officers, GPs, family members, community navigators, health, social care or the voluntary sector.



9.3 Residents interested in attending a Tenancy Sustainment Workshop, or would like to work with Income Maximisation to get tailored budgeting advice, can contact the Council [online](mailto:incomemaximisation@scambs.gov.uk), via email incomemaximisation@scambs.gov.uk or by telephone 01954 713 000.

10. Outcomes

10.1 All tenancy sustainment and support services are tailored to the individual needs of each tenant. The outcomes of any support intervention will typically fall into one of the following categories:

1. Successful Resolution and Tenancy Sustainment

The issues the tenant is experiencing can be resolved (either with short-term or longer-term support in place) and they are able to sustain their tenancy.

2. Ongoing Support with Monitoring

While the tenant's issues cannot be immediately resolved, a support plan is in place to help maintain the tenancy. Regular monitoring will be undertaken to assess the effectiveness of the support and ensure the tenant is fulfilling their responsibilities.

3. Alternative Housing Support

Despite engaging with tenancy sustainment and support services, the tenant is unable to resolve the issue and cannot continue to sustain their tenancy. In such cases, SCDC will provide appropriate support to assist the tenant in securing alternative accommodation.

4. Non-Engagement and Escalation

The tenant refuses to engage with the support services offered. In these circumstances, SCDC may be required to take further action, which could include proportionate enforcement measures, such as tenancy-related notices or applying anti-social behaviour interventions in line with the [Anti-Social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014](#)).

11. About this Policy

11.1 This policy will be reviewed every three years. However, earlier reassessment may be required following tenant feedback, further guidance or where there are changes in operations and / or legislation.

11.2 This policy has been produced in consultation with tenant representatives. If you are interested in getting involved in





shaping our housing service, we would love to hear from you; please visit our website for more information and to get in touch.

12. Service Requests and Complaints Process

12.1 Tenants should report initial service requests, such as repairs or safety concerns, through the designated channels:

Repairs: [Online](#) via the Council's [website](#)

By phone via the Repairs Hotline: 0800 0851 313

General Queries: **By phone** – 01954 713 000

Email – duty.housing@scambs.gov.uk

The [Communications Charter for tenants and leaseholders](#) sets out detailed guidance on how to contact the Council and the service standards that can be expected in relation to communication and responsiveness.

12.2 SCDC aims to provide excellent customer service, but we recognise that mistakes can happen. If you are dissatisfied with the service that you have received following a service request, you can make a complaint in accordance with the Council's Complaints Policy. To make a complaint, please visit our [website](#) or telephone 01954 713 000 or e-mail housing.complaints@scambs.gov.uk.

13. Our Values

Ambitious

We are proactive and take a forward-thinking approach to addressing challenges.

We create smart solutions and reach our goals with determination and a clear vision.

Collaborative

We foster a culture of teamwork and open communication.

We work with and involve stakeholders, to improve how the organisation works and serves the public.

Compassionate

We prioritise empathy and understanding in decision-making and service delivery.

We consider the wellbeing of people and communities in everything we do and we replicate this when we talk to our colleagues because we know that when we support each other, we all do better.



Accountable

We take responsibility for our actions and decisions.

We own up to mistakes and make sure we fulfil our commitments.

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Appendix B: Tenancy Sustainment & Support Policy – Feedback from Tenant Reps (4 November 2025)

Reference.	Notes	Response	Place and Notes	Updated Reference
3.4	'Risk factors' – Recognised? Experience?	General Comment	<p>The risk factors associated with tenancy failure are informed by both recognised guidance & legislation and the practical experience of existing providers.</p> <p>As a more in-depth example; there was a large research project that ran from 2022 to 2024 called 'Holding on to Home' that focused on understanding why some tenants may struggle to sustain their tenancies, particularly those receiving Universal Credit (UC) or Housing Benefit. Studies such as these have helped to inform policy development and best practice for the social landlord sector.</p>	N / A

Reference.	Notes	Response	Place and Notes	Updated Reference
4.3	<p>Tenancy sustainment support services.</p> <p>I suggest categorising the types of support the SCDC offers its tenants. For example:</p> <p>DIRECT SUPPORT: provided by our officers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help with understanding and completing forms. • Assistance in explaining information so tenants understand their rights and responsibilities. • Help with being able to access online services. • Budgeting, benefits and household management support. • Help with starting a new tenancy, for example help with setting up utilities or finding furniture. • Dealing with neighbours' disputes or anti-social behaviours. • Dealing with hoarding. <p>SIGNPOSTING AND REFERRALS: connecting you with expert external agencies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help with accessing addiction services, mental health charities and supporting the referral process. • Assisting in finding employment, education, training or volunteering opportunities. • Getting support for health and / or wellbeing. <p>REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting tenants with disabilities and / or special adjustments 	Amended	We have categorised the examples of tenancy sustainment support services into these headings.	4.3

Reference.	Notes	Response	Place and Notes	Updated Reference
5.2	<p>New tenancy support. A vulnerability check at 36 weeks feels very late for a 12-month tenancy. A tenant in crisis at 15 weeks might not be identified until the 36 weeks missing the goal of early intervention.</p> <p>Suggested addition to the 6 week and 36-week visits, housing services officers will conduct a proactive welfare check at let's say the 4-month mark. This light touch contact (which could be a phone call or an email) is designed to identify any emerging issues with budgeting, repairs or neighbours and can offer support at the earliest possible stage.</p>	General Comment	<p>Service Manager – Tenancy & Estates confirmed that additional informal visits may occur based on tenant needs (example, rent arrears), however these additional visits (beyond the 6 / 36-week visits) would be based upon need as opposed to part of the standard Introductory tenancy process.</p> <p>As the quality and breadth of our data improves through the tenant census, we can enhance our ability to cross-reference datasets, enabling us to deliver more targeted and effective services to specific tenant groups, including the provision of tenancy support.</p>	N / A
5.5	Question: Why is this only available for residents ages 65 and over? Why are 18 – 65-year-olds excluded and is there a way we can include them as well?	General Comment	We can include a note within the policy to advise we can signpost / make referrals to other services for younger people as and when required.	Note included at bottom of 5.5
7.5	How does LIFT work?	General Comment	Some further details can be found here – South Cambs District Council: District Council helps residents secure millions of pounds in benefits not being claimed.	N / A

Reference.	Notes	Response	Place and Notes	Updated Reference
10.	<p>Suggest adding another section on Measuring the impact of our support. We could potentially word it as: to ensure that we are effectively meeting our goals and are holding ourselves accountable, the council will track and report annually on KPIs including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The percentage of introductory tenancies that successfully convert to secured tenancies. • A reduction in evictions due to rent arrears where support was provided. • Tenant satisfaction rates with the support received. • The total financial value of benefits secured for tenants through our support. 	General Comment	Service Manager – Tenancy and Estates will be considered as part of review of our performance indicators and monitoring of the consumer standards in early 2026.	N / A
5.1	Amend “ <i>providing...</i> ” to “ <i>offering...</i> ”	Amended	Amended.	5.1
5.1	Pre-tenancy support (give clearer overview about this and what services would apply here)	Amended	Updated to “ <i>Providing support to someone before they receive an offer and / or before a tenancy begins, such as help with forms etcetera.</i> ”	5.1
10.1	Include a ‘such as’ example to clarify where this may be relevant.	Amended	Updated 9.1 (point 4) to include “ <i>...(example, explore the possibility of a tenancy related notice or the use of anti-social behaviour tools from the Anti-Social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014)</i> ”.	10.1 (point 4)
Int.	Service requests / complaints section amendments from HEB to be added.	Amended	Section 11 updated.	12
Int.	Amendments in relation to the ‘Review’ section from HEB.	Amended	Section 10 updated.	11

Reference.	Notes	Response	Place and Notes	Updated Reference
Int.	<p>Are we able to more pro-actively promote tenancy sustainment services? This could be an accompanying page to this policy on the website, tenancy sustainment services articles in the newsletter, a spotlight on the Income Maximisation team. Also, could we utilise our Housing social media to promote?</p>	General Comment	<p>We will look to review the information on our website in relation to tenancy sustainment.</p> <p>As an additional, we have created a spotlight article (which has been sent to all housing staff) on the Income Maximisation team and to promote the services they offer to our internal colleagues.</p> <p>Will continue to promote the services throughout the year.</p>	N / A
-	Sections 4 and 5 have been rejigged following feedback from Leadership Team to improve the flow of the policy document.	-	-	-



Appendix C

South Cambridgeshire District Council

Reaching Every Tenant Policy (Housing)

Version	Draft (v0.2)
Ownership	Head of Housing
Approved By	Cabinet
Policy Contact	Service Manager – Tenancy & Estates
Approval Date	24 March 2026
Publication Date	1 April 2026
Date of Next Review	March 2029

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1. Introduction

1.1. This policy sets out how South Cambridgeshire District Council (SCDC) identifies, engages with, and tailors support to meet the needs of tenants living in our properties. It explains how we take a proactive approach to ensure that tenants with specific needs feel safe, receive appropriate support and are able to maintain their tenancies successfully.

2. Scope and Purpose

2.1 This policy applies to all SCDC tenants and sheltered housing leaseholders. For the purposes of this document, these groups are collectively referred to as 'tenants'. The policy does not include other leaseholders or properties managed by Ermine Street Housing or Shire Homes Lettings.

2.2 The purpose of this policy is to establish a consistent and compassionate approach to identifying, engaging with and providing tailored support to individuals or groups who may have specific needs and are less likely to engage with the housing service. These groups may face barriers to communication, access, or trust, and may be at greater risk of exclusion or harm if not proactively supported.

2.3 This policy outlines how SCDC will:

- Recognise and respond to indicators of individuals requiring tailored support
- Use inclusive and accessible engagement methods.
- Ensure that no tenant is overlooked due to limited contact or visibility.

3. Identifying Hard to Reach Tenants

3.1 Tenants who are considered hard to reach often have specific or complex needs and may be experiencing vulnerabilities. They may be at greater risk of harm, feel excluded or unsupported, or are struggling to cope independently and may need additional assistance.

3.2 While there are many touchpoints through which SCDC can engage with tenants, there are some tenants who do not engage with the housing service directly or ignore our attempts to engage with them. This policy recognises the importance of identifying and supporting these individuals to ensure no one is overlooked.

3.3 SCDC fully upholds each tenant's legal right to enjoy their home in peace, free from unwarranted interference. At the same time, we recognise our duty to identify and offer tailored support to tenants who have specific needs, particularly where a lack of



engagement could signal risks to their wellbeing or the sustainability of their tenancy. We also have a responsibility to ensure homes are properly maintained and kept safe.

3.4 Any tenant could have specific needs. Identifying individual needs should be done on a case-by-case basis. Vulnerability is changeable and everyone is likely to have specific needs at some point in their lives.

3.5 Vulnerability may arise from a range of personal, social or economic factors. Examples include, but are not limited to:

- **Disability and Health Needs**
Includes physical, sensory, mental health and learning disabilities.
- **Vulnerability and Safeguarding**
Covers survivors of abuse, individuals affected by trauma or addiction, and those subject to safeguarding concerns.
- **Social and Economic Disadvantage**
Encompasses financial hardship, unemployment, low income and fuel poverty.
- **Housing Instability and Support Needs**
Includes tenants who need enhanced support, those with hoarding behaviours, history of homelessness, rent arrears, or failed tenancies.
- **Marginalised and Minority Groups**
Covers refugees, asylum seekers, Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities and individuals with protected characteristics.
- **Life Transition and Isolation**
Includes older people, those living alone, care leavers, new or young parents, and households experiencing bereavement or relationship breakdown.

3.6 All relevant staff are trained to recognise indicators of individual and potentially multiple needs through a range of methods, including, (but not limited to):

- Direct disclosure by tenants.
- Observations made during interactions.
- Referrals from partner agencies.
- Creating opportunities for tenants to self-identify where appropriate.



3.7 Relevant staff are equipped to identify and respond to a wide spectrum of needs, which may include:

- Mental health conditions.
- Physical or learning disabilities.
- Financial hardship (for example, low or unstable income, unemployment, debt, fuel poverty).
- Substance or behavioural addictions (such as drug, alcohol, gambling).
- Experiences of domestic abuse.
- Safeguarding concerns.
- Past or ongoing Trauma.
- Anti-social behaviour (ASB).
- Housing / tenancy history (example, history of rent arrears, homelessness, previous eviction or failed tenancies).
- Care leavers.
- Support requirements.
- Under or over occupation of housing.
- Hoarding behaviours.
- Changes in household circumstances (example, bereavement, relationship breakdown, lack of support networks, becoming new or young parents, difficulty furnishing a home).

4. Recording Individual Needs

4.1 To enable SCDC to tailor its housing services using data insights and identify any potential risks, the Council maintains records for each tenant. These records may include details of known individual needs or risks. All information is stored securely and handled in strict accordance with GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation) requirements. For further information please see our [Privacy Notice](#).

4.2 As part of the information held, SCDC will also ask for details of the Next of Kin or Emergency Contact in case we are unable to engage with the tenant and are concerned for their wellbeing.

4.3 If the tenant lacks capacity, we can communicate with the following individual if we receive explicit consent and legal authority from the tenant to do so:

- Attorney under a Lasting Power of Attorney (LPA).
- Court-appointed Deputy.



- Public Authority Deputy.
- Court of Protection Order.

5. Indicators and Data Insights

5.1 There are many touchpoints through which we engage with tenants, such as routine property inspections, tenant record updates, home visits and general enquiries. If a tenant has specific needs and has not engaged, SCDC will take proactive steps to contact them. Some indicators of a tenant needing tailored support are (but not limited to):

- Rent arrears.
- Missed appointments.
- Repair requests.
- Anti-social behaviour complaints.
- Estate management – identifying hoarding, property neglect for example.
- Concerns raised by neighbouring tenants, staff, contractors, etcetera.
- No access provided (example, for gas servicing, electrical checks, stock condition surveys etcetera).

5.2 SCDC utilises data to help identify indicators of individual needs. This includes information relating to the following areas:

- No response to calls / emails and home visits from Housing Services Officers (HSOs)
- No repair requests
- No contact regarding rent payments or rent arrears
- No resident engagement
- No requests for additional support

6. Engaging with Tenants

6.1 SCDC interact with tenants via a range of methods, all of which could identify individuals who may have specific needs, particularly those who are not actively engaging and may need tailored support.

6.2 All Council staff and contractors acting on its behalf have a duty to remain vigilant to signs of individual needs. Where such signs are identified, they must refer or signpost individuals to appropriate tailored services in line with safeguarding procedures.

6.3 Outlined below are some of the routine interactions that SCDC undertake as part of its housing management and maintenance service.



Gas safety inspection and services

SCDC inspect and service gas appliances owned by SCDC every 10 months. It is a condition of each individual tenancy agreement that tenants must provide access to their homes upon request for a gas safety check. SCDC will make every possible effort to gain access and will ultimately take legal action if access cannot be secured to comply with gas safety regulations.

No repairs for two years

If a tenant has not requested any repairs or had contact with the housing service in the past two years, SCDC will carry out a home visit to check that the property is being maintained, address any tenancy concerns, ensure the tenant is aware of available support, and confirm there are no significant issues affecting their wellbeing

Housing stock condition surveys

SCDC will undertake a stock condition survey of every property on a rolling 5-year programme. As part of the survey, tenant details will be checked to ensure all records are up to date.

Data collection

To ensure SCDC maintain accurate and up to date records, all tenants are requested to update their contact details and tenancy profile information, including any disabilities or individual service needs. Any tenants with limited engagement will be contacted by letter, email (if applicable), or telephone. Should these methods prove unsuccessful, a home visit will be conducted to establish contact and ensure that no tenant with specific needs is overlooked.

7. Reasonable Adjustments

- 7.1 SCDC is committed to ensuring that the housing service is accessible and inclusive for all tenants, including those with disabilities or require enhanced support. In accordance with the Equality Act 2010, SCDC will make reasonable adjustments to remove or reduce barriers that may disadvantage individuals.
- 7.2 Reasonable adjustments may include, but are not limited to:
 - Contact preferences
 - Offering home visits
 - Use of advocates or interpreters
 - Alternative communication formats such as large print or translated materials



- Adjusting appointment times or locations to accommodate mobility or health needs
- Home adaptations

7.3 Requests for reasonable adjustments will be considered on a case-by-case basis, considering:

- Individual specific needs
- The practicality and cost of the adjustment
- The effectiveness of the proposed adjustment in removing any barriers

8. Available Support

8.1 SCDC offer a range of tailored services to support tenants to maintain successful and sustainable tenancies. These services are designed to promote tenancy sustainment by addressing a variety of needs, including financial hardship, health and wellbeing, social isolation and other individual needs. Support may be provided directly by the Council or through referrals to specialist partner agencies.

8.2 Further information on the types of tailored services provided can be found in the Tenancy Sustainment & Support Policy.

9. Service Requests and Complaints Process

9.1 Tenants should report initial service requests, such as repairs or safety concerns, through the designated channels:

Repairs: [Online](#) via the Council's [website](#)

By phone via the Repairs Hotline: 0800 0851 313

General Queries: **By phone** – 01954 713 000

Email – duty.housing@scambs.gov.uk

The [Communications Charter for tenants and leaseholders](#) sets out detailed guidance on how to contact the Council and the service standards that can be expected in relation to communication and responsiveness.

9.2 SCDC aims to provide excellent customer service, but we recognise that mistakes can happen. If you are dissatisfied with the service that you have received following a service request, you can make a complaint in accordance with the Council's Complaints Policy. To make a complaint, please visit our website or telephone 01954 713 000 or e-mail housing.complaints@scambs.gov.uk.



10. Legislation

- [Hazards in Social Housing \(Prescribed Requirements\) \(England\) Regulations 2025](#)
- [Social Housing \(Regulation\) Act 2023, Consumer Standards \(Tenancy Standard\)](#)
- [Equality Act 2010](#)
- [The Housing Ombudsman Complaints Handling Code](#)
- [Mental Capacity Act 2005](#)
- [Domestic Abuse Act 2021](#)
- [Regulator of Social Housing – Safety and Quality Standard](#)

11. About this Policy

11.1 This policy will be reviewed every three years. However, earlier reassessment may be required following tenant feedback, further guidance or where there are changes in operations and / or legislation.

11.2 This policy has been produced in consultation with tenant representatives. If you are interested in getting involved in shaping our housing service, we would love to hear from you; please visit our website for more information and to get in touch.



12. Our Values

Ambitious

We are proactive and take a forward-thinking approach to addressing challenges.

We create smart solutions and reach our goals with determination and a clear vision.

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We foster a culture of teamwork and open communication.

We work with and involve stakeholders, to improve how the organisation works and serves the public.

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We prioritise empathy and understanding in decision-making and service delivery.

We consider the wellbeing of people and communities in everything we do and we replicate this when we talk to our colleagues because we know that when we support each other, we all do better.



Accountable

We take responsibility for our actions and decisions.

We own up to mistakes and make sure we fulfil our commitments.

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Appendix D: Reaching Every Tenant Policy – Feedback from Tenant Reps (6 November 2025)

Reference	Notes	Response	Place and Notes	Updated Reference
6.3	No repairs for two years. I suggest adding “to ensure the tenant is aware of available support and confirm there are no significant issues affecting their wellbeing.”	Amended	Amended to read <i>“If a tenant has not requested any repairs or had contact with the housing service in the past two years, SCDC will carry out a home visit to check that the property is being maintained, address any tenancy concerns, ensure the tenant is aware of available support, and confirm there are no significant issues affecting their wellbeing.”</i>	6.3
4.1	<i>“...the Council maintains records for each tenants...”</i> – confidential?	General Comment	Updated to include link to SCDC’s Privacy Notice. The Privacy Notice also refers to subject access requests etcetera.	4.1
5.1	‘Rent arrears...’ – If they receive housing benefit this may not be apparent. Also, some tenants pay for substantial periods in advance.	Amended	As per discussion at the policy panel meeting, we have added in <i>“...(but not limited to)...</i>	5.1
3.2	Change <i>“...at engagement...”</i> to <i>“...to engage...”</i> ?	Amended	Amended.	3.2
3.5 & 7.1	Discussion at the policy panel meeting around finding an alternative term to ‘service needs’?	Amended	Following feedback after the meeting via e-mail, we have changed the term ‘service needs’ to ‘who require enhanced support’.	3.5 and 7.1
3.6 / 3.7	Relevant / appropriate staff?	Amended	We have amended ‘all staff’ to ‘all relevant staff’.	3.6 and 3.7
3.2	Change the term <i>‘left behind’</i> to something else.	Amended	We have amended this to be <i>‘overlooked’</i> .	3.2
Int.	Concerned about my neighbour button on the website / anon e-form? Would this be possible and / or useful?	General Comment	The Service Manager – Tenancy & Estates will look into this more and discuss with team.	N / A

Reference	Notes	Response	Place and Notes	Updated Reference
Int.	Do we consider setting a maximum acceptable duration of 'no contact', if so, what is considered as a 'contact'? Would those with automated payment methods, for example, be prioritised when considering the previously mentioned aspects?	General Comment	The policy describes that we will use repairs information to establish those who have not received a repair in the last two years and look to prioritise contact with them. Other factors / indicators (such as rents arrears, missed appointments etcetera.) will also inform this. This will be taken forward as part of the implementation of the 'Hard to Reach' Policy, with reports run on a quarterly basis to identify those that have not had any contact over the last two years.	N / A
Int.	What is the reporting process for staff / contractors? Are there concern cards etcetera, is there a formal reporting method / tool?	General Comment	Cause for concern cards used and are e-mailed through to safeguarding inbox.	N / A
Int.	Service requests / complaints section amendments from HEB to be added.	Amended	Section 9 updated.	9
Int.	Amendments in relation to the 'Review' section from HEB.	Amended	Section 11 updated.	11

Updated draft version, following policy panel meeting:	v0.2 (as track changes)
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4.2 HQN Mock Inspection – Feedback

Peter Campbell to report.

4.3 Adaptations

Margaret Wilson to discuss the suitability of an adapted property to the needs of the prospective disabled tenant.

4.4 Tpas Scrutiny Conference – 7 October 2025 – Feedback Report

Margaret Wilson attended the Tpas Scrutiny Conference in Loughborough on 7 October 2025. A copy of her feedback report was circulated to the board on 6 November 2025 and is included for noting.

Tpas National Tenant Scrutiny Conference 2025 – 7 October 2025

Margaret Wilson – Delegate Report

This conference was so popular that the tickets ran out a week before. One might interpret this as demonstrating the importance of tenant scrutiny and a response to the increased emphasis on the ‘tenant voice’ being heard loud and clear. The Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 introduced a new era of Social Housing regulation whereby the Regulator *expects to see evidence* of tenant influence throughout the operations of social housing landlords. The difference between ‘influence’ and ‘scrutiny’ was to ask a question; ‘Has x happened and do tenants feel that influence?’ In other words, the influence is seen in an issue identified by tenants and the scrutiny is to result in whether tenants experience a difference.

The fundamental matter at the heart of the conference was to help all delegates – councillors, staff, officers and tenants – understand exactly what the difference between scrutiny and influence is, how to carry it out, and what to scrutinise. There are no ‘right answers’ but there are right practices broadly defined as what improves conditions for tenants as identified and experienced by tenants.

PANEL

The morning began with a Panel discussion followed by questions and answers. Members of the panel were:

- Jack Smith, Assistant Director Assessment and Tenant Engagement – Regulator of Social Housing (RSH)
- Alicia Mortlock, Independent, Involved and Informed Tenant
- Adrian Foster, Customer Engagement Manager, Aspire Housing and Councillor
- Caritas Charles, Independent Councillor and TPAS Scrutiny Expert

Regulator of Social Housing

Surprisingly perhaps, the Regulator does not dictate the best way to do scrutiny; rather, they look for whether that organisation’s scrutiny works. The perspective is about the relationship between landlord and tenants where “the unequivocal question is, ‘does the landlord listen?’” (Jack Smith). Measurement is where the Regulator looks but responses and data are not an answer in themselves because they look for evidence of “how tenants’ views have been considered” (Required Outcome, Transparency, Influence and Accountability standard: 1.3 Engagement with tenants). Scrutiny is directly mentioned under Specific expectations;

- **2.2.1** [Landlords] must give tenants a wide range of meaningful opportunities to influence and scrutinise their landlord’s strategies, policies and services. This includes in relation to the neighbourhood where applicable.

- **2.2.2** Registered providers must assist tenants who wish to implement tenant-led activities to influence and scrutinise their landlord's strategies, policies and services. This includes in relation to the neighbourhood where applicable.

The Regulator's focus is on the tenant's experience, their role is to test how the landlord enables scrutiny and the 'tenants' voice' to be heard and taken into account. Since the Regulator started inspections they have only awarded 1/3 landlords with C1, the highest grade. Some of their evidence derives from asking tenants whether they know their landlord's plans and whether they know their role within scrutiny and what changed (if anything)?

A national level poll with 400,000 responses indicated that Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) do not always answer the questions they should. For example, a 'score' or a percentage is not an answer to a question on performance, it is an indication of ways to think about things. Tenants' views are the base-line, their lived experience is the criterion, and these lead to understanding what *tenants* think is important. Landlords should then support tenants in asking the questions that they want to ask.

To summarise, scrutiny from the Regulator's view is driven by tenants and assessed by the level of engagement they have with their landlords. The Regulator's judgement is not about right answers, or even TSM scores, but how tenants experience their day-to-day dealings with landlords and whether they notice changes following scrutiny.

Involved Tenant

This analysis highlighted the differing views tenants have illustrated by the well-known metaphor of the elephant in the room as experienced by three blind people. Everyone is attempting to identify a given entity but each has their own experience of it with a "distinctive point of view", none of which describe the whole .

Although tenant involvement has brought about a shift in relations between landlords and tenants, scrutiny, as opposed to involvement, is moving back towards landlord control. Scrutiny should be treated properly as a 'deep dive' into practices and policies, it is not an "either or proposition", it is integral to tenant participation as it is there to identify gaps between perception and performance. Here, we are back to the lived experience of tenants. Tenants must do their part and be prepared to engage with their landlords as change can only begin when they are willing to act.

A new factor is the mandatory requirement to publish information (coming into force in October 2026). This coincides with a move towards regional tenant involvement. (Given the current unitary authority consultation, this is relevant to SCDC).

This will enable tenant involvement / oversight at a regional level. Interaction between tenants of different landlords across larger areas has the potential to allow “assess[ment of] the quality of outside contractors [...] especially communications”. (My conversations with tenants from other areas, both Housing Associations (HAs) and Local Authorities (Las), at several conferences have indicated a trend of taking repairs and maintenance contracts back in-house as well as similar areas of dissatisfaction with contractors).

Specifically mentioned was the matter of legal departments within landlord operations. Given the tendency for these to be associated with ‘black holes’ of information, tenants should have the opportunity to be involved in scrutiny of legal departments.

This speaker was alerting delegates to the continued changing landscape of Landlord / Tenant engagement and drawing attention to the need for better communication between them from all aspects of social housing provision. Although the establishment of inspection through the RSH is the overarching result of various tragedies, there are other ramifications that need to be considered. For example, lip service to involving tenants with decision-making at all levels, will no longer suffice because tangible evidence will be sought. Scrutiny cannot be allowed to become a poor relation to involvement. Using the ‘elephant’ metaphor is to alert everybody within social housing that tenants are central and all views, although valid, must keep this in mind.

Housing Association

It is always interesting to hear from HA Tenant Involvement officials. HAs are not new to regulation and inspection; equally, they are solely concerned with housing. Nevertheless, many (most?) HAs speak of a rather different relationship with their tenants than LAs. Similarly to SCDC, this particular HA has a policy of providing remuneration for tenants involved with scrutiny. The reasoning was, “Tenants, who have lived experience, are paid – but how much more would consultants cost?”

Within this HA, Aspire Housing, the declared benchmarks derive from transparency, engagement and performance matching promises. The ethos is “people first” and scrutiny is treated as interdependent with engagement. Their aim is to check whether they, the landlord, is doing what it said. They do this by encouraging scrutiny, asking tenants to question all policies and activities and having tenant endorsement of ‘customer policy’.¹ “Have we actually gone out and asked are we doing what they want or just reviewing policy?”, “What are customers telling us?” These sentiments do represent the approach of most HA delegates that I have encountered but, naturally, that is limited to those that attend conferences.

¹ This HA refers to its tenants as ‘customers’ – not popular with some tenant delegates.

Communication between landlord and tenants is seen as allowing scope to improve the service offered. Quality is considered not just in terms of cost but value for money; i.e. cost may be lower but how good is the standard of service delivery and would people be prepared to pay more for improved performance? TSMs provide information on performance but not, necessarily, quality; that assessment comes from deeper scrutiny permitting the ‘tenant voice’ to be heard throughout the organisation. For example, challenging a ‘good’ result from TSM surveys may be difficult if there is unwillingness to listen.

In summary, I cannot improve on the speaker himself, “It’s no good having aims and promises if they don’t happen.” Providing tenants with opportunities and resources and allowing them to decide which areas and topics to scrutinise is what improves services and tenants’ experience.

Independent Councillor

An elected Councillor’s view on social housing as it relates to tenants in general and scrutiny in particular is a rare thing. Also described as a TPAS Scrutiny Expert, this Councillor’s presentation was unequivocally concerned with tenant empowerment. His view that Councillors are a resource for tenants trying to get their voice heard was refreshing – and he also meant it for HA tenants even though their landlords are not under direct LA control. However, recognising the different business protocols meant that tenant input into policies and practices will vary with the organisations’ structure. We were also reminded that representation is important and to be alert for the inevitable changes ahead with national government’s ambition for more Combined Authorities and elected Mayors. (This especially pertinent for SCDC with the current consultation on our own structure).

Unsurprisingly, tenant scrutiny was portrayed as challenging, especially for LAs as it is delivered within a democratic organisation where political ideology changes. Care needs to be taken to avoid duplication of effort and, although Officers and Staff are used to a hierarchical structure, tenants may not be. Nevertheless, “Housing is about [...] people and tenant scrutiny is essential not optional.” Additionally, Councils have many different services and housing (in all its guises) is just one aspect of that.

Within the noise of Council responsibilities tenant voices get diluted and resident involvement is patchy. Sometimes this is because tenants don’t know how to hold landlords to account; conversely, Councils cannot assume that tenant *involvement* is enough. Before any kind of scrutiny is done tenant influence must be evident, afterwards change must be experienced by tenants. Involvement and influence are not the same as scrutiny. It is not changed structures within the organisation that are important but the lived experience of tenants; do they actually see a difference? This is the question that Regulators will seek to answer. Therefore, it should be tenants who choose the questions to be answered, not “preselected subjects”.

The relationship between landlords and tenants is expected to be one of partnership, landlords need to treat tenants as contributors that are there to improve systems and policies and their voices must be within governance of the organisation. This partnership of equals should be visible to Regulators. Too often tenants have been seen as adversarial or antagonistic. This apparent opposition has led to a gap in perceptions. Social housing tenants rarely have a choice in housing and should not be seen as consumers of choice.

The measure of that relationship is only partially found in TSMs. This Councillor's view was that landlords should be looking into their TSM outcomes to find any under-represented groups. The TSM survey is a tool, but it is only as good as the questions asked. For example, how well does the landlord know "who is behind the door"? How well does the landlord understand the difference in impact of actions on different tenants? Are there areas or groups within the overall TSM results that are being left out? Remembering that tenants can now make direct contact with the Regulator, landlords *must* listen to and *act on* what their tenants tell them. The Regulator's questions amount to, "Do you think your landlord listens to you and acts on it?" This is not measured by policies and procedures but by how the tenant feels about their encounter and its outcome.

When assessment comes, landlords must inform their tenants of the outcome. If the inspection identifies problems or weaknesses, a follow-up inspection will look for what changes have been delivered (not promised). Councillors are in place to represent tenants alongside all their other constituency residents and "need to recognise that tenants have no choice" in who their landlord is. Regardless of "landlord language" tenants live in homes, not stock or units. They are entitled to know how the Regulator has assessed their landlord performance especially in response to issues that are important to them. Councillors ought to understand how the relationship between those they represent and those officers from whom they seek answers functions.

This led naturally to the opportunities and challenges presented by devolution and combined authorities. The balance will be between tenant voices getting lost and a stronger platform for them. The changes should strengthen the tenant voice because their contributions should be a "strategic priority, not an optional add-on." As the size of the Authority increases, the responsibility to work *with* people and not *do to* them grows with it.

Tenants and Councillors can view the whole area / region and look at the different landlords and landlord responses. Tenants may question how well landlords communicate and co-operate with each other to share good practice or how well contractors (or in-house) perform. Such collaboration can enhance the tenant experience much more effectively (and cheaply) than expensive consultants, for example. Where scrutiny is concerned, tenants, in particular, can learn from each other and call for information from a wide range of sources that they may

otherwise be unaware of. The challenge will be ensuring that scrutiny is tenant-led and not lost as the dust settles on any amalgamation.

Clearly the ‘tenant voice’ is a weighty matter for this Councillor. As their elected representative and a speaker at social housing events, he promotes their new-found power and encourages tenants to question their landlord by offering encouragement and advice. Looking towards more combined authorities, he sees the challenges but wants tenants and landlords to embrace the opportunities and work collaboratively to ensure that tenants’ day-to-day lives are improved. This can happen when tenants understand that they are now the driving force behind scrutinising their landlord’s performance and that their Councillors are a resource that they can tap.

WORKSHOP

Delivering successful scrutiny in Local Authorities (LA)

Councillors

Undoubtedly this workshop had significant relevance for South Cambridgeshire District Council. The focus here was on democratic accountability and the important role that involved Councillors have in supporting LA tenants. A potentially tongue-in-cheek remark drew attention to “the ballot box” because tenants are also resident voters. The differences between LAs and HAs were observed alongside the effect of Regulation and the “risk of tokenism” whereby Councils ‘resolve to’ but don’t ‘deliver’ ie. tick-box methodology.

The workshop began with a look at the challenges tenants find when attempting to engage in scrutiny. The bureaucracy in local government makes decision-making slow and language can present barriers to those ‘outside’. The mnemonic *KeepItSimpleStupid* (KISS) was offered as advice to report writers; plus a requirement to provide ‘jargon busters’. (Happily SCDC has already begun to adopt this process).

A question from the floor was, “Where do we start?” and the answer was, “At the beginning.” TPAS and ARCH (Association of Retained Council Housing) provide guidance and tools for scrutiny. Councillors also provide opportunities for links to wider services such as planning or environment. This can be valuable where internal Council departments don’t communicate well – “internal communication is really bad”. The area of repairs contractors adds another layer of impenetrability to communication. However, Councillors may be unaware of the legislation that their Officers work within. From this, tenants can go to their fellows, ask them how they relate to the landlord, how their problems (complaints?) are dealt with, and decide where scrutiny will help to improve systems and services.

Councillors can provide a strong community identity with overviews that social housing tenants may not have. They are also directly accountable to the area electorate and should have an

interest in all their constituents' living standards and how tenants might be affected. This can make them potent allies as living conditions extend beyond property boundaries to wider neighbourhoods.

The same consumer standards that have applied to HAs now extend to Councils. Here the buzzwords were 'transparency' and 'accountability'. Tenants can now take their concerns directly to the RSH. The Regulator will look for evidence of compliance with consumer standards and Officers should remember that engagement is not necessarily a committee.

The impact of devolution was addressed. Whilst day-to-day housing services will not be affected, elected Mayors will now have decision-making powers over housing, transport and regeneration and some funding matters will move to regions rather than districts / boroughs. This presents challenges for tenants as their interests would now compete with other priorities and there is currently a lack of clear structures that support the tenant voice. This can lead to a confusing maze of authority and power that may be compounded by the amalgamation of different LAs with their individual protocols. Conversely, the increased power of the tenant voice provides opportunities for wider scrutiny and the incorporation of effective systems across regions.

Gateshead Council

We next had a presentation from Gateshead Council, a LA in the North-East. Although larger (18,000 homes), the landscape and property types are similar to SCDC (rural, urban, houses, flats, sheltered, etc.). The speakers were a tenant and the Lead for Involvement and Diversity within the Council. This Authority's housing had been managed by an Arm's Length Management Organisation (ALMO) but has been taken back to Council control and has also taken their repairs and maintenance works back in house.

Their scrutiny panels not only comprise tenants but included people from other organisations such as charities, Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) and other interested parties. These panellists were invited by "going out and asking". One such scrutiny was to ask, 'how well do you know your tenants?' as relying on profile data held by the Council was considered insufficient.

In general, scrutiny results from performance data, complaints information and observed trends. The resulting feedback from conversations with tenants uses workshops to identify priorities and agree the review with involved tenants.

More detail was given on the scrutiny of complaint handling. The TSMs produced a low score; broken down this related to inconsistency in complaint responses. A focus group was formed, led to a workshop that provided more understanding; specifically identified was poor communication resulting in a negative impact on tenants' experience. For example, Officers became aware that some complaints were not formally recorded. A clear standard for responses

was agreed and a sample of a range of complaints was scrutinised. They then developed a template based on the Housing Ombudsman's guidance and what mattered to tenants. For interest the findings were:

- Inconsistency in the structure of the letter – different format and not in correct template
- Jargon and unclear language – too much jargon and 'officer speak'. Too formal and complicated sentences.
- Too much detail – many responses were too wordy and detailed making it difficult to read and understand – less is more!
- Reading age – average letter was pitched too high
- Responses weren't personal – use of words like 'the property' rather than 'your home'
- Our understanding of the complaint – sometimes we failed to outline our understanding of it, which doesn't comply with the HO Code
- Investigating officer's contact details – sometimes no contact details were included
- Inconsistencies in provision of H[ousing] O[mbudsman] information – some responses didn't include this
- Lack of information around outstanding actions – some cases had outstanding actions, such as repairs yet to be carried out. Group expected a timeframe for completion rather than 'we'll be in touch' attitude
- Quality – spelling and grammar mistakes reflects an unprofessional approach
- Timescales for escalation – customers felt 10 days they're given isn't always enough to digest and make a decision on escalating (*sic*)
- Impartiality – lack of impartiality as responses written by the service it's about
- Consistency – Overall consistency seemed to vary depending on the service responding²

All the scrutiny panel's recommendations were accepted and resulted in a dedicated independent team to look at incoming complaints. This avoided Council Departments dealing with their own personnel. They also developed a Vexatious Complaints policy. Furthermore, the Council undertook a follow-up review following the same process as the original scrutiny panel devised. The template was mostly being used and where there were inconsistencies the relevant manager and Team were addressed. An in-house survey resulted in improved customer satisfaction.

Summarising the whole workshop, Councillors are an underused resource by tenants and their representatives – especially with the forthcoming changes to Local Government. Advice from those tenants and LA officers that have prepared and done scrutiny from scratch;

² Taken directly from presentation slides.

- Have a clear plan agreed from the outset
- Allow enough time between meetings to gather information
- Include breaks in meetings
- Talking to officers – more conversational than interview style
 - Helps to get more from the session
 - Builds relationships and buy-in from colleagues³

The Great National Scrutiny Review Launch Tackling Social Housing Stigma

Stop Social Housing Stigma (SSHS)

The afternoon Workshop was delivered by SSHS, an organisation with its roots in the wake of the Grenfell disaster. The enquiry into the appalling loss of life in the fire in that tower block revealed that stigma was at the heart of the problems between tenants and their landlord. The ensuing Green Paper stated:

- “As the 8,000 conversations and submissions behind this Green Paper show, many people living in England’s four million social homes feel ignored and stigmatised, too often treated with a lack of respect by landlords who appear remote, unaccountable and uninterested in meeting their needs...
- Stigma was the most consistent theme raised by residents at the engagement events. Residents told us that they were made to feel like *second class citizens*. They reported being treated as an *underclass*. We will begin to tackle the stigma which for too long has been associated with social housing” (original emphasis)

[This is the source of the tenant empowerment that birthed SCDC’s Resident Involvement Team and the Housing Engagement Board (HEB).]

SSHS is working jointly with TPAS and forms the foundation that involved tenants can now build on to scrutinise and eliminate stigma in their daily lives. This stigma not only comes from landlords and their staff but from contractors, neighbours, businesses and other government bodies – feeding into society and culture. It is frequently undetected by those that practice it but is sharply felt by citizens living in Council or Housing Association dwellings. The loudest cry from tenants is that landlords do not listen to the people on the receiving end of their decisions and there is often no ‘human element’ in their dealings with landlords.

Since people have to live with consequences stemming from decision-makers, the way that stigma is tackled by landlords is being scrutinised by SSHS and TPAS. They have produced a

³ Taken directly from presentation slides

national survey that will run until January 2026. From just over 1,000 responses 70% felt stigmatised of which 55% stated that it came from their landlord.

Together with academics and the Chartered Institute of Housing (CHI) SSHS and TPAS have developed a 'Journey Planner' to assist tenants in scrutinising their landlord's policies and practices in a bid to bring change. Changes envisaged are better relationships between tenants and all parties involved with their landlords as evidenced by constructive dialogue, productive practices or beneficial ideas. As the 'journey' to eliminating stigma progresses more lessons can be learned, difficult questions can be proposed, and defensive attitudes reversed. Tenants must lead and direct the 'journey'.

To date several themes have emerged; change comes via tenants, cultures change at the speed of trust, service delivery and repairs harbour stigma, governance also features stigma and distrust. Nevertheless, there are "first class" staff and organisations that celebrate being providers of social housing.

Questions to stimulate scrutinising stigma were suggested such as; what areas or which people should be involved and what information would be sought. Delegates were invited to consider their own areas of scrutiny and reflect on how the SSHS 'Journey Planner' or SSHS members could assist. Once the review of involved scrutiny panels is completed, it is proposed to bring participants together for exchanges of views, successes and things that could have been done better. The ambitious plan is to take results and outcomes to national level (parliament?) so that stronger partnerships and relationships can be forged and built upon good practice and stamping out the stigma that attaches to social housing tenants.

The workshop concluded with a short, practical example of identifying and preventing stigma in a large organisation. In this example the landlord concerned had just taken repairs and maintenance back in house following a change in procurement legislation. Following up on quality and standards entailed managers being taken to see repairs by the tenants involved in scrutiny. The expression used was, "to face the flack." Managers were encouraged to ask tenants about the work and to ask themselves, "Would I want that in my home if it was offered to me?" When tenants are ignored, it feels like stigma because they see themselves as not important enough to merit a 'good job' or high standard work being done in their homes. The impression is given that it doesn't matter because they're *only* Council tenants.

Following that exercise staff were given further training and the communication process was revised. Another example was providing the trades people with a proper briefing on the tenant whose home they were being sent to. If the tenant is profoundly deaf, for instance, then extra effort must be made to let them know that the workman has arrived to do the job. Tradespeople often don't wait long enough for the occupant to come to the door. Not only does the tenant

have to re-arrange the repair, continue to live with the issue that needed repair, but the workman's time is wasted and another job that could have been done in the time that they lost must wait longer as well.

This workshop clarified the culmination of forming SSHS into a cohesive and recognisable organisation. Teaming up with TPAS further demonstrates the importance of dealing with stigma towards social housing tenants. They have developed a tool, Journey Planner, to assist in scrutiny, always aiming at improving relationships and services between landlords and their tenants.

CONCLUDING SESSION

This session showcased five different success stories chosen to encourage all delegates in their scrutineering endeavours. In a strictly limited time presenters outlined the issue concerned, the scrutiny policy / area undertaken and the final outcome.

Anchor Resident Scrutiny Panel

Anchor is a not-for-profit housing provider specialising in homes for older people and those with special needs. Anchor's issue for scrutiny was anti-social behaviour procedures. The Scrutiny Panel conducted resident surveys, incorporated feedback, reviewed paperwork, and made 13 recommendations, all of which were adopted by management. Outcomes included faster response times, a 'resident-friendly' help sheet that helped residents to identify what was anti-social behaviour and how to report it plus the organisation's website provided details of all aspects pertaining to anti-social behaviour. An 'ambassador network' was established so that residents had access to people that could help. Location Managers (equivalent to Housing Officers) received specific training to equip them for dealing with neighbourhood problems. There was also a 'Being Neighbourly' help sheet produced so that residents had guidance on acceptable behaviour and living standards.

The reported impact was an increase in cases (from 200 to 959), faster resolution (134 cases open), resident satisfaction increased (31% 50 63%), Location Managers had 100% support and 'happier community' scores increased to 75%.⁴

Vivid Homes

Here we were shown the steps to a "Five-star scrutiny process" developed by this HA. Unsurprisingly, the process begins with reviewing Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and how they portray their customers' perceptions. Once the area is identified, the parameters set and the scrutiny is conducted, recommendations are made and presented to the Board (governing body). A response is given with a report of the impact for customers. The objective is to conduct

⁴ No details were given for data sources.

up to four scrutiny reviews *per annum*. To date four reviews have been opened with three completed. The topics were predictably concerned with repairs; quality thereof, resolved at first point of contact, time to completion (non-emergency) and internal and external communication. All but the last have been completed. Vivid's 'key' is linking the lived experience of tenants with involved tenant insight and benchmarking. The equal weighting of the three views leads to stronger partnerships and co-operation between tenants and the landlord. Each 'side' "co-owning" outcomes by recognising that scrutiny works best as a "two-way street" and improvement benefits everybody.

Ashfield District Council

This scrutiny review sought to answer "local concerns" about the Council's lettings policy. The issue arose because residents wanted clarity about the provision of homes to asylum seekers. It was not driven by political reasons but one of fairness and transparency about the Council's role. The scrutiny panel researched the Council's obligations, reviewed policies and legal duties, studied funding streams, looked into national responsibilities and set questions for the Housing Services. Their research found that national government assigns refugee status and funds housing providers to buy homes. It is their obligation to feed and house refugees. The outcome of this scrutiny panel was to provide clarity for interested parties and to reassure them that the Council's duty towards homelessness is unaffected by housing refugees. Housing placements are the responsibility of contractors working for the Home Office. A positive consequence was also that homes purchased in this way will revert to the Council estate once refugees vacate them.

EMH Homes

EMH is a HA with long-established resident engagement arrangements. However, "outdated practices", frustration and an adversarial dynamic came to a head in 2022. Scrutiny Panel meetings "resembled conflict zones" with bad language and insulting attitudes leading to defensiveness and barriers to progress. In 2022 the engagement strategy was revised resulting in personnel changes and the recruitment of new members.⁵ Initial staff resistance, due to the Panel's reputation, was reduced as new members encouraged collaborative practices. Senior managers actively engaged with identifying service areas of falling satisfaction or increasing levels of complaint.

Investigations benefitted from improved data sharing and more open communication ultimately leading to recommendations for the governance board. Recommendations were accepted and action plans developed and deployed. Following a Regulator's inspection (Grade C2) the Panel

⁵ Strategy was to use the TPAS 11 step plan.
<https://www.emh.co.uk/media/4848/scrutiny-panel-11-step-plan.pdf>

Chair began to attend Board meetings. Further influence and trust are illustrated by Panel members' involvement in recruiting senior staff. However, this is not the end; future plans envision expanded resident participation reflecting diverse tenant voices and greater connection between scrutineers and engaged residents – all flowing from co-operative working practices established via scrutiny.

Wigan Borough Council

Wigan's scrutiny example was an exercise carried out when the country was getting over the COVID lock-down. The panel investigated the function of estate caretakers and was primarily concerned with whether the service gave value for money to tenants whose rents paid the budget. As a Council, Wigan also had responsibility for the wider borough where residents and users do not pay rent into the Housing Revenue Account (HRA). The investigation revealed the confusion between the roles of caretaker – a specific service for Council housing – and street scene / grounds maintenance which is for all residents. It was found that caretakers did not offer additional services to tenants because their service was the same as for all residents. Caretakers themselves encountered confusion, lack of coordination and communication about tasks that they were assigned to. Furthermore, the caretaker service was found to be almost "invisible". Five recommendations centred around estate caretaker visibility and communication were made and carried out. As later reported by the portfolio holder for housing, communication was improved between caretakers and tenants as well as between teams. Estates' environment improved and satisfaction surveys led to 1,200 respondents stating that they wanted to be more proactive and involved in shaping future services. Hence the presentation's title, "From Acorn to Tsunami".

OVERALL

Alongside the panel presentations and workshops was the opportunity to meet delegates from across the country. Their personal experience of successes and challenges enhances the takeaway knowledge and understanding provided by the speakers. As usual, common themes were around communication, repairs, contractors, stigmatising attitudes from executives, the public and councillors. The increasing emphasis on on-line communication threatens to leave a large section of social housing residents deprived of meaningful interaction with their landlords.

However, entrusting tenants with the power to question and instigate in-depth scrutiny of landlords' activities and policies, together with the expertise provided by organisations like TPAS and ARCH, offers the opportunity to improve services and relationships leading to better living conditions throughout social housing. Attendees were provided with evidence that scrutiny is a notably effective tool for change.



5. Standing Items

5.1 Forward Plan

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

Housing Engagement Board – Forward Plan – 2025 / 2026

Date of Meeting	Topic	Description	Lead Officer	Decision Route	Outcomes
January 2025 Separate session outside of HEB for tenant representatives Completed	Budget Update	To review the budget position for 2025 / 2026	Peter Campbell	Cabinet – 4 February 2025	Briefing session held on 20 January 2025
June 2025 Separate session outside of HEB Competed	Tenant Satisfaction Survey	To note the findings of the tenant satisfaction survey. Briefing presented by consultants	Julie Fletcher	N / A	Briefing session held on 12 June 2025
21 July 2025 Completed [Previously 27 March 2025]	Anti-social Behaviour Policy (new policy)	To note / provide further comments on the ASB policy following tenant consultation through the policy panel	Julie Fletcher	Cabinet – 24 June 2025	-
21 July 2025 Completed [Previously 27 March 2025]	Service Plan	To review the service plan for 2025 / 2026	Julie Fletcher	Housing Engagement Board / Lead Member for Housing	-
10 July 2025 Completed	Annual Complaints Report and Self-Assessment of the Housing Ombudsman Code	To note and provide comments relating to the Annual Complaints Report / Self-Assessment of the Housing Ombudsman Code	Julie Fletcher	Cabinet – 24 June 2025	-

Date of Meeting	Topic	Description	Lead Officer	Decision Route	Outcomes
21 July 2025 Completed	Tenant Satisfaction Measures	To note the submission of the annual TSMs	Julie Fletcher	Cabinet – 24 June 2025	-
November 2025 Likely to be a separate briefing session Completed – 18 September 2025	Mock Inspection of the Housing (Landlord) Service	To note the findings and actions arising from the mock inspection of the Housing (Landlord) Service in preparation for a Social Housing Regulator Inspection	Peter Campbell	N / A For Information only	-
October 2025 – special policy meeting Completed [Previously June 2025]	Assignment and Succession Policy (existing)	To note / provide further comments on the Assignment and Succession Policy following tenant consultation through the policy panel Linked policy / procedure to Tenancy Policy	Geoff Clark	Housing Engagement Board / Lead Member for Housing	Approved
October 2025 – special policy meeting Completed	Compliance Safety Policies : - Gas Safety - Water Hygiene	To note / provide further comments on the compliance safety policies following tenant consultation through the policy panel	Eddie Spicer	Cabinet	Approved
December 2025 [Revised]	Compliance Safety Policies : - Electrical Management	To note / provide further comments on the compliance safety policies following tenant consultation through the policy panel	Eddie Spicer	Cabinet	-
December 2025 [New]	Tenancy Sustainment and Support Policy	To note / provide further comments on the Tenancy Sustainment and Support Policy following tenant consultation through the policy panel	Geoff Clark	Cabinet	-

Date of Meeting	Topic	Description	Lead Officer	Decision Route	Outcomes
December 2025 [New]	Reaching Every Tenant Policy	To note / provide further comments on the Reaching Every Tenant Policy following tenant consultation through the policy panel	Geoff Clark	Cabinet	-
January 2026 Separate session outside of HEB for tenant representatives	Budget Update	To review the budget position for 2026 / 2027	Peter Campbell	Cabinet to approve budget February 2026	-
February 2026 – Special Policy Meeting [New]	Compliance Safety Policies: - Fire Safety - Asbestos - Lift Safety	To note / provide further comments on the compliance safety policies following tenant consultation through the policy panel	Eddie Spicer	Cabinet – May 2026	-
February 2026 – Special Policy Meeting [Revised]	Compensation Policy	To note / provide further comments on the Compensation Policy following tenant consultation through the policy panel	Peter Campbell	Cabinet – May 2026	-
February 2026 – Special Policy Meeting [Revised] [Previously September 2025]	Repairs and Maintenance Policy	To note / provide further comments on the Compensation Policy following tenant consultation through the policy panel	Eddie Spicer	Cabinet – May 2026	-
February 2026 – Special Policy Meeting [Revised] [Previously September 2025]	Pets Policy	To note / provide further comments on the Pets Policy following tenant consultation through the policy panel	Geoff Clark	Housing Engagement Board / Lead Member for Housing	-

Date of Meeting	Topic	Description	Lead Officer	Decision Route	Outcomes
March 2026 [Revised] [Previously September 2025]	Estate Services and Communal Areas Policy (new policy)	To note / provide further comments on the Communal Areas Policy following tenant consultation through the policy panel	Geoff Clark	Cabinet – May 2026	-
Likely to be a separate briefing session March 2026 [New]	Tenant Satisfaction Survey Results	Review the outcome of the 2025 / 2026 tenant satisfaction survey results	Julie Fletcher	TSM submission to Cabinet	-
March 2026 [Revised] [Previously September 2025]	Asset Management Strategy (existing)	Review and update of the existing Asset Management Strategy	Eddie Spicer	Cabinet – May 2026	-
TBC [New]	Performance Monitoring	Agree performance indicators and oversight and scrutiny procedures	Julie Fletcher	Housing Engagement Board / Lead Member for Housing	-
TBC [New]	Complaints Annual Report and Self-Assessment	Endorse the Complaints Annual Report and Self-Assessment for 2025 / 2026	Julie Fletcher	Cabinet – June 2026	-
TBC [Revised] [Previously December 2025 – delayed due to further work required on policy]	Communal Room Charging Policy (new policy)	To note / provide further comments on the Communal Room Charging Policy following tenant consultation through the policy panel	Geoff Clark	Cabinet	-

Date of Meeting	Topic	Description	Lead Officer	Decision Route	Outcomes
TBC [Revised] [Previously December 2025]	Empty Property Re-let Standards	Project group being set up with tenant reps to look at the standard of empty properties when they are let. Outcome: Project Group to provide a report / suggestions of what they feel should be changed which will be considered as part of the new Standard	Eddie Spicer	Housing Engagement Board / Lead Member for Housing	-
TBC [New]	Compliance Safety Policies: Hazards (including Damp and Mould)	To note / provide further comments on the compliance safety policies following tenant consultation through the policy panel	Eddie Spicer	Cabinet – May 2026	-
TBC [New]	Relet Management Policy	Following outcome of scrutiny project	Eddie Spicer / Dave Armitage	Cabinet	-
TBC [New]	Rent Arrears Management policy	To note / provide further comments on the Rent Arrears Management Policy following tenant consultation through the policy panel	Geoff Clark	Cabinet	-
TBC [New]	Rent Setting and Service Charges Policy	To note / provide further comments on the Rent Setting and Service Charges Policy following tenant consultation through the policy panel	Geoff Clark	Cabinet	-

5.2 Contracts Review Panel

A meeting to review and discuss the ground's maintenance contract was held on 17 December 2025.

Geoff Clark to provide an update.

5.3 Policy and Procedure Panel

Meetings to discuss the suggested amendments to the following policies were held as follows:

- Compensation Policy – 7 October 2025
- Tenancy Sustainment and Support Policy – 4 November 2025
- Reaching Every Tenant Policy – 6 November 2025

Copies of the meeting notes are included for noting.

The following policies were approved by Cabinet on 2 December 2025.

- Gas Safety and Servicing Policy
- Water Hygiene Policy
- Assignment and Succession Policies

Ivor Grant to report.

Compensation Policy Meeting

7 October 2025 – 2pm to 4pm

Notes from Teams Meeting

Attendance: Ivor Grant

Laura Nelson

Oana Sutherland

Peter Campbell (SCDC)

Julie Fletcher (SCDC)

Dave Armitage (SCDC)

Apologies: Brian Burton

John Silverwood

Margaret Wilson

Mike Luffman

Patti Hall

Purpose of the Meeting

To review and refine the draft Compensation Policy based on feedback and ensure clarity, fairness, and alignment with Housing Ombudsman guidance.

Key Discussion Points and Outcomes

1. Contractor Compensation Policies (Section 2.3)

- Tenants are not expected to request contractors' compensation policies.
- Contractors must align with the Council's policy.
- Clarification will be added: compensation may be paid by either the Council or the contractor, but not both.

2. Household Insurance and Financial Loss (Section 5.2)

- Tenants are expected to have household contents insurance.
- The Council will cover losses not covered by insurance, provided the tenant is not at fault.
- Clarification needed to avoid double compensation (insurance + Council).

3. Utility Usage Due to Repairs

- Example: use of electric heaters left by contractors.
- Tenants can claim compensation if they can evidence increased utility costs.

4. Loss of Service Compensation (Section 5.3)

- Current daily rates (example, £3 – £5) are too low.
- Suggested increase to £5 – £10 / day.
- Hotel costs will be covered separately if accommodation is required.
- Flexibility needed for vulnerable households or special circumstances.

5. Distress and Inconvenience (Section 5.4)

- Align with Housing Ombudsman's updated compensation bands:
 - Minor: £50 – £100
 - Moderate: £100 – £600
 - Significant: £600 – £1,000
 - Severe: £1,000+
- A caveat will be added to reflect that these figures may change with Ombudsman updates.

6. Loss of Earnings (Section 5.5)

- No compensation for scheduled works with prior notice.
- Compensation may apply for unanticipated or prolonged disruptions.
- A form of wording will be developed to reflect this nuance.

7. Health Impacts from Housing Conditions

- Long-term health issues (example, from mould) are not covered under this policy.
- Such cases should be pursued through legal channels.
- Policy already states compensation is not awarded for claims resolved via insurance or legal action.

8. Decision-Making and Appeals

- Service managers (example, Julie, Eddie) will decide on compensation cases.
- Appeals process will be aligned with the Council's complaints policy (20 working days).
- Clarification will be added to the policy.

9. Accessibility and Appointment Adjustments (Section 9.1)

- Reasonable adjustments will be made for appointment times and locations.
- Wording to be updated to reflect "mutually convenient times" and clarify location flexibility within reason and safety.

Next Steps

- Julie Fletcher will update the draft policy with all agreed changes.
- The revised draft will go to the Leadership Team, then to HEB.
- A tracked-changes version will be shared with attendees for review.

Tenancy Sustainment and Support Policy Meeting

4 November 2025 – 10am to 11am

Notes from Teams Meeting

Attendance: Ivor Grant

Mike Luffman

Oana Sutherland

Vivienne Till

Geoff Clark (SCDC)

Dave Armitage (SCDC)

Martyn Hilliam (SCDC)

Apologies: Laura Nelson

Brian Burton

John Silverwood

Key Discussion Points

1. Risk Factors (Section 3.4)

- Risk factors contributing to early tenancy termination are based on both staff experience and research (e.g. CIH's "Holding on to Home" report).
- A link to the report will be shared for further reading.

2. Categorisation of Support Areas (Section 4.3)

- Feedback suggested categorising listed support areas for clarity.
- This will be implemented in the next version using tracked changes.

3. New Tenancy Support Visits (Section 4.4)

- Formal visits occur at six and 36 weeks.
- Suggestion to add a 4-month visit due to the long gap.
- Additional informal visits may occur based on tenant needs (e.g. rent arrears), however these additional visits (beyond the 6/36-week visits) would be based upon need as opposed to part of the standard introductory tenancy process.

4. Visiting Support Service (Section 4.7)

- Currently available to residents aged 65+.
- Discussion on extending support to younger tenants (18 – 65).
- A separate service exists for younger people, provided by the County Council.
- A note will be added to the policy to reflect this.

5. Income Maximisation (Section 6.5)

- Use of LIFT (Low Income Family Tracker) software to identify unclaimed benefits.
- Positive outcomes noted: 246 residents supported with increased income.
- A link to further information and case studies will be included in the feedback document for further reading.

6. Measuring Impact (Sections 9.4 and 9.5)

- Suggestions to include KPIs such as:
 - Conversion rate of introductory to secure tenancies.
 - Reduction in evictions.
 - Satisfaction rates.
 - Financial value of secured benefits.
- Emphasis on showcasing positive outcomes and Council efforts.
- GC to consider how impact could be measured.

7. Promotion and Awareness

- Proposal to feature tenancy sustainment services in tenant newsletters.
- Improve website visibility and consider revising the tenant handbook.
- Mixed views on digital vs physical formats; commitment to accessibility for all.

8. Policy Clarity and Wording

- Several wording suggestions made:
 - Replace “providing” with “offering” support.
 - Clarify “pre-tenancy support” to mean support after an offer but before tenancy starts.
 - Add examples to explain “necessary and proportionate enforcement action.”

Tenant Handbook

- Discussion on revising and reissuing the handbook.
- Some tenants never received one; appetite for review of the handbook / welcome pack which could be considered in the future.
- Volunteers offered to help with rewriting and improving accessibility.

Next Steps

- Incorporate feedback into the next policy draft.
- Use tracked changes for transparency.
- Continue discussions in the next meeting on Thursday.

Reaching Every Tenant Policy Meeting

6 November 2025 – 1pm to 2pm

Notes from Teams Meeting

Attendance: Ivor Grant

Margaret Wilson

Mike Luffman

Patti Hall

Vivienne Till

Geoff Clark (SCDC)

Dave Armitage (SCDC)

Martyn Hilliam (SCDC)

Apologies: Laura Nelson

Brian Burton

John Silverwood

Oana Sutherland

Purpose of the Meeting

To review and refine the Reaching Every Tenant Policy, ensuring it effectively supports tenant engagement, identifies those at risk, and aligns with regulatory expectations.

Main Discussion Points

1. Policy Wording and Clarity

- **Section 6.3:** Suggested rewording to focus on tenant well-being rather than just property condition.
- **Section 4.1:** Question asked about data confidentiality, advised that we could link to the Council's privacy notice within the policy.
- **Terminology:** Terms like "service needs" and "smart solutions" were flagged as jargon. Will review to establish some clearer, plain-English alternatives wherever possible.

2. Data Collection and Record Accuracy

- Emphasis on maintaining **up-to-date tenant records** to meet regulatory standards.
- Mention of the **customer portal** and ongoing projects to update tenant information.

3. Indicators for Tenant Engagement

- **Rent arrears, lack of repairs, and no contact** were discussed as indicators of potential issues.
- Concerns raised about **benefit recipients** and **advance rent payers** being overlooked due to lack of visible financial distress.
- Agreement that **lists of indicators should not be prescriptive** but used as guidance.

4. Cross-Departmental Contact

- Suggestion to explore **Council-wide contact mechanisms**, not just housing.
- Example given of other departments successfully contacting tenants via **letters, texts, and calls**.

5. Staff Training and Responsibilities

- Amendment to say that '**relevant staff**' are trained to identify and respond to tenant needs.
- Discussion over whether staff are equipped to handle **substance and behavioural addictions**; Geoff Clark clarified that while direct intervention is limited, **signposting and tenancy enforcement** are possible.

6. Procedural Suggestions

- Consider setting a **maximum duration of no contact** (example, 2 years) to trigger proactive outreach.
- Discussion about whether there would be use for anonymous reporting mechanisms for community members.
- Use system to highlight tenants with no recent contact or repairs.

7. Feedback and Policy Updates

- All changes will be tracked and visible in future versions.
- Participants encouraged to continue providing feedback via email.

Action Items

- Amend policy wording for clarity and regulatory alignment.
- Link to privacy and FOI notices.
- Review terminology like “service needs” and “smart solutions”.
- Explore procedural enhancements for data collection and tenant contact.
- Clarify staff roles and training scope.



5.4 Tenant Satisfaction Measures and Key Performance Indicators Panel – Quarter 2 Reports

Notes from the meeting held on 4 December 2025 are included for noting.

Margaret Wilson to report.

Tenant Satisfaction Measures and Key Performance Indicators Panel

Notes of the Quarterly Meeting held on Thursday, 4 December 2025

from 10am to 11.30am (on Teams)

Notes generated by Co-pilot (from the transcript of the recording)

In Attendance: Geoff Clark – SCDC

Grace Andrews – SCDC

Ivor Grant – Tenant Volunteer

Michael Luffman – Elected Tenant Representative

Vivienne Till – Elected Tenant Representative

Key Discussion Points

1. KPI Clarifications

- **Average Re-let Times:**
 - Issue raised about calculation method (whether to include zero for months with no lettings).
 - Decision: Avoid using zero as it gives a misleading average; clarify by stating “no properties this month” instead of “none.”
 - Benchmarking shows 26 days is unrealistic compared to actual performance.
- **Number of Re-lets:**
 - Variations explained: dependent on property type (minor empty properties only), availability, and required works.
 - Plan: Add explanatory notes in the appendix for clarity.

2. SAP Ratings

- **Definition of “Self-contained”:**
 - Dwellings with independent facilities (kitchen, bathroom, living space).
- **Solar Panels Impact:**
 - Included in ratings; detailed explanation to be provided by technical team.

3. New Builds and Rent Loss

- **New Builds:**
 - Margaret requested more detail on stages (contract signed, construction, handover).
- **Rent Lost from Vacant Dwellings:**
 - Clarified as rent not received due to empty properties, not money spent on works.
 - KPI wording to be revised for clarity.

4. Repairs and Management Monitoring

- **Repair Appointments:**
 - Data sourced from Mears.
- **Management Monitoring KPIs:**
 - Feedback suggests confusion; plan to restructure under Consumer Standard headings for clarity in 2026.

5. Complaints and Service Requests

- **Complaint Volume and Classification:**
 - Some “complaints” are service requests (example, hedge trimming, adaptations).
 - Need clearer definitions of what is a complaint and what is a service request; new policy signed off and will be published soon.
- **Performance Drop-in Complaint Response Times:**
 - Linked to staffing shortages and resource challenges; improvement measures underway (training, better use of extensions).

6. Tenant Satisfaction and Engagement

- **Surveys:**
 - This related to new tenant satisfaction surveys, that is the relet service and the condition of a new home
 - Low response rates; cumulative figures explained.
 - Work ongoing to improve participation.

7. Other Issues

- **ASB Cases:**
 - Managed individually; increase may reflect better reporting rather than worsening behaviour.
- **Decent Homes and Asbestos Checks:**
 - More detailed breakdown requested; technical team to provide.
- **Communication Failures:**
 - Significant rise in complaints about lack of updates; discussed automation and interim responses as potential solutions.

Action Items

1. Clarify KPI Calculations

- Add note in reports stating “no properties this month” instead of “none” for months with zero lettings.
- Include explanation in appendix for KPIs like average re-let times and minor empty properties.

2. Improve KPI Report Format

- Restructure KPIs under **Consumer Standard headings** for clarity (planned for new year).
- Rework unclear KPI titles (example, rent loss wording to specify “due to empty properties”).

3. Provide Additional Information

- Add breakdown for:
 - **New builds** (contract signed → construction → handover).
 - **Decent Homes criteria** and **Asbestos compliance**.
- Explain “self-contained” in SAP ratings and confirm solar panel impact (Eddie to provide details).
- Expand appendix for engagement stats and tenant volunteer section.

4. Complaints Process

- Publish new **complaints policy** on website and promote via tenant magazine.
- Use **extensions** more effectively when response deadlines cannot be met.
- Provide examples of service requests vs complaints for clarity.

5. Tenant Satisfaction Surveys

- Increase promotion to boost response rates (this relates to new tenancy surveys).
- Add additional questions to monthly and annual surveys (Julie to follow up – this relates to the M.E.L repair satisfaction survey).

6. Communication Improvements

- Implement **communications charter** internally.
- Explore **automated interim updates** for complaints to reduce “lack of communication” issues.
- Consider staff training and process review to improve timely responses.

7. Future Reporting Enhancements

- Include explanatory notes for KPIs that are regulatory requirements.
- Review overlapping KPIs (example, properties empty over 4 months vs 6 months) and remove duplication.

Tone and Closing

- Meeting emphasized clarity, transparency, and improving tenant understanding of KPIs.
- Training for tenant representatives on KPIs encouraged.
- Next steps include implementing changes in Q3 and preparing for regulatory alignment.
- Meeting ended with seasonal greetings and agreement to follow up on outstanding queries.



6. Any other Business

Any additional issues to be raised.

7. Meeting Date for 2025 / 2026

- 26 March 2026 (Teams meeting / venue to be confirmed)

8. Closing