



Housing Engagement Board

Quarterly Meeting

21 July 2025 – 2pm to 4pm

Agenda Pack

Housing Engagement Board Agenda

Date: **Monday, 21 July 2025**

Time: **2pm – 4pm**

Venue: **Monkfield Meeting Room, SCDC Offices, Cambourne**

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1. Welcome and Apologies

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

2. Quorum and Appointment of Vice-Chair

A quorum shall consist of 50% of members.

Appointment of the Vice-Chair.

3. Minutes of Previous Meeting – 12 December 2024

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 December 2024 are included for approval.

Housing Engagement Board
Minutes of the Quarterly Meeting
held on Thursday, 12 December 2024
from 2pm to 4pm
in the Monkfield Room, South Cambridgeshire Hall, Cambourne

- Attendees:** Cllr John Batchelor – Chair
Cllr Eileen Wilson
Peter Campbell (SCDC – Head of Housing)
Dave Kelleway (Elected Tenant Representative) – Vice Chair
Bob Buss (Co-opted Tenant Representative)
Diane Hale (Co-opted Tenant Representative)
Margaret Wilson (Elected Tenant Representative)
- By Invitation:** Brian Burton (Tenant Volunteer)
Julie Fletcher (SCDC – Service Manager – Housing Strategy)
Geoff Clark (SCDC – Service Manager – Tenancy and Estates)
Eddie Spicer (SCDC – Service Manager – Housing Assets)
Dave Armitage (SCDC – Resident Involvement Team Leader)
Bronwen Taylor (SCDC – Resident Involvement Officer) – Minute taker
- Apologies:** Cllr Heather Williams
Jim Watson (Co-opted Tenant Representative)
Oana Sutherland (Co-opted Tenant Representative)
Patti Hall (Tenant Volunteer)

1. Welcome and Apologies

The Chair welcomed everyone to the last meeting of 2024 at 2.03pm.

The Chair also welcomed Ellie Haines, Development Officer – Climate and Environment, who would be giving a presentation on the Climate and Nature Strategy.

2. Quorum

The meeting was quorate.

3. Minutes of previous Meeting – 26 September 2024

The Chair referred to the minutes of the meeting held on 26 September 2024.

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

3.1 Matters Arising from previous Meeting – 26 September 2024

The matters arising from the previous meeting are below.

3.1.1 Item 3 1 – Matters Arising from the meeting held on 8 July 2024

Matter Arising from the meeting held on 28 March 2024

Income and Expenditure Statements in Communal Halls

Action: Geoff Clark said that a meeting to discuss the Income and Expenditure Statements in Communal Halls with the Housing Accountant and Margaret Wilson had been arranged for 8 October 2024.

Report back: Geoff Clark advised that the meeting was held on 8 October 2024 and that the Accountant would look at producing more detailed statements. He said he had asked the Accountant for an update earlier in the week, which they did not have, however he would follow up with them the following week.

Margaret Wilson said there should be a record of all income received.

Action: Geoff Clark

3.1.2 Item 5.1 – Annual Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs)

Action: Julie Fletcher to send a link of the full Tenant Satisfaction survey results, which showed the percentage split between “very” and “fairly”, to the board.

Report back: The link was emailed to the board on 27 September 2024.

For noting.

3.1.3 Item 6.1 – Co-option for Leaseholder (West)

Action: Dave Armitage to amend the Terms of Reference document to increase the number of elected tenant representatives from six elected tenant representatives, including one leaseholder, to six elected tenant representatives, two per area, **plus** one leaseholder representative.

Report back: Julie Fletcher advised that the Terms of Reference (ToR) document had been amended and was included in the pack for approval.

The Chair asked if the board were satisfied with the changes and asked for their approval.

Dave Kelleway said that he was satisfied with the amendments to the ToR document, however, the Co-option Policy document would also need to be amended and he suggested having a Teams meeting in either January or February 2025 to discuss this.

Peter Campbell said that a small number of our properties were owned and suggested that point 4.1, fourth bullet point in the ToR document be amended to read “resident leaseholder”.

Dave Kelleway referred to point 6.5 – Maximum term of office for Vice-Chair will be four years in total. – in the ToR document and suggested that this point be removed. He explained that should a board member, who had already served four years as the Vice-Chair, and an inexperienced board member both be nominated for the role of Vice-Chair, the former would not be able to stand due to this rule. He offered to make amendments to both the ToR and Co-option Policy documents.

Julie Fletcher said that the Resident Involvement Strategy document would also need to be amended.

Margaret Wilson suggested putting this issue on the agenda for the Coffee morning meeting to be held in February 2025.

Peter Campbell said that the coffee morning would be an informal meeting for tenants to meet tenant representatives.

Julie Fletcher added that the coffee morning was an opportunity to test the success of these meetings.

Action: Dave Kelleway and Julie Fletcher

4. Standing Items

4.1 Forward Plan 2024 / 2025

Julie Fletcher referred to the Forward Plan included in the pack and the items planned for the coming months, as follows:

- 2 December 2024 – Consultation on the Future Social Housing Rent Policy – a meeting was held with tenant representatives to discuss the Future Social Housing Policy and Council's proposed response.
- 2 December 2024 – Consultation on the Right to Buy – a meeting was held with tenant representatives to discuss the Right to Buy and the Council's proposed response.
- 12 December 2024 – Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report 2023 / 2024 – to note the complaints performance for 2023 / 2024 and any lessons learnt.
- 12 December 2024 – National Policy Changes – Briefing note outlining the national policy changes affecting the Housing Service following the Autumn Budget 2024.
- January 2025 – Budget Update – to review the budget position for 2025 / 2026 – a meeting with all tenant representatives had been arranged for 20 January 2025.
- 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.
- 27 March 2025 – Communal Room Charging Policy (new policy) – To note / provide further comments on the Communal Room Charging policy following tenant consultation through the policy panel.

Julie Fletcher said that the Communal Room Charging Policy meeting may help answer Margaret Wilson questions.

- 27 March 2025 – Service Plan – To review the service plan for 2025 / 2026.
- 27 March 2025 – Relets Process Analysis – To note the findings and actions as a result of an internal process mapping review of our relets process.
- June 2025 – Empty Property Re-let Standards – Project group to be set up to look at the Empty Property Re-let Standards which would be taken forward by the Voids and Operations Manager once in post.

HEB to consider findings and recommendations from the project group.

A separate piece of work, looking at internal process mapping to help improve our relet times, was currently underway.

- June 2025 – Assignment and Succession Policy (existing policy) – To note / provide further comments on the Assignment and Succession Policy following tenant consultation through the policy panel Linked policy / procedure to Tenancy Policy.
- June 2025 – Communal Areas Policy (new policy) – To note / provide further comments on the Communal Areas Policy following tenant consultation through the policy panel.
- September 2025 – Asset Management Strategy (existing policy) – Review and update of the existing Asset Management Strategy.
- TBC – Together with Tenants Charter – Review what actions were required to achieve the Together with Tenants Charter.

Julie Fletcher said that the Together with Tenants Charter had been superseded by new regulations and initiatives and therefore was not necessary to be looked at and would be removed from the Forward Plan.

Dave Kelleway agreed that the Together with Tenants Charter should be removed from the Forward Plan.

Peter Campbell asked for an additional column with the Outcomes to be added to the Forward Plan so that we would have a record of what had happened over the year.

Action: Julie Fletcher

4.2 Contracts Review Panel

Geoff Clark advised that as Patti Hall was the only tenant representative who attended the meeting held in September 2024, they were unable to move forward with any discussions. He said that he had contacted her the previous week to set up another meeting however she was unable to as she had been unwell. He added that she said she was hoping to set up a date early in the new year.

Geoff Clark said that the Emergency Lifeline Contract which was a system set up for sheltered housing tenants was up for renewal on 31 January 2025 and that tenant input would be needed for the procurement of the new contract. He added that he would contact all tenant representatives for their involvement in the process.

Margaret Wilson asked if the contract could tick over on a monthly basis in the meantime.

Geoff Clark said he would like to start the process as soon as possible, however, it could tick over on a monthly basis in the meantime.

4.3 Policy and Procedure Panel

Brian Burton said that they had had a couple of meetings on the Anti-Social Behaviour Policy and he referred to the notes of the meeting held on 13 November 2024, which were included in the pack. He said they had given a great deal of feedback to Martyn Hilliam and that they were waiting for further information from him regarding the recommendations they had put forward. He said a meeting was being arranged for January 2025 to discuss the amendments that had been requested.

Julie Fletcher said that this policy would be presented to Cabinet in May 2025.

4.4 Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) Review Panel

Margaret Wilson apologised as she had not had a chance to draft the notes from the meeting held on 5 December 2024.

Dave Kelleway asked why the minutes / notes of the meetings were taken by tenant volunteer members of the panel and not the officers. He said he was aware of a dispute with the minutes from one of the previous meetings and although the minutes were clear and concise, support from officers would mean the minutes would be more consistent. He added that the tenant volunteers would then be able to concentrate on participating in the meeting.

Julie Fletcher said that the way the panel meetings were structured was that they were led by tenants rather than led by officers and this had been agreed to by the tenant volunteers at the structure meetings held earlier in the year. She added that we did not have the capacity and that Bronwen Taylor was the only available officer. She suggested that we have clear action points rather than full minutes and she would discuss this with Dave Armitage, however, capacity was an issue.

Margaret Wilson said that it was difficult to chair a meeting and take notes at the same time, and although these were informal meetings, accurate notes were still needed. She said that there was also technical help available where one would speak and notes were written. She added that there could be inaccuracies in the notes, but as long as the audio recording was kept and should queries arise, we could revert to the recording. She said the recording could be sent to the Chair of the panel or Bronwen Taylor who could correct any inaccuracies.

Julie Fletcher said she would ask Dave Armitage to look into what options were available.

Peter Campbell said that the council were looking at an additional version of Teams, with no additional cost, which produced a summary of meetings and this could be an appropriate way of recording the meetings. He added that there was other software available, however the difficulty was that it was a programme that was either switched on or switched off for the entire system. He said that quite often it was stored abroad, usually in America, and the terms of use was that the recordings, which could contain confidential and sensitive information, could be listened to by people who owned the company. He said that although there was not that level of confidentiality in this group, there was elsewhere in the council and we had clear instructions from our IT department that no other software must be used. He added that he was certain that Teams would do what we required.

Margaret Wilson said that at one of the ARCH conferences she had attended, it was said that landlords must find resources, as per regulation.

Peter Campbell said that the resources referred to in the regulation were for jobs that were important and for taking minutes of meetings for services within the council. He added that when officers had internal meetings, apart from official council meetings, they took their own minutes. He said it would need a substantial amount of funding to get in additional resources.

Action: Dave Armitage

4.5 Estate Inspections

Bronwen Taylor referred to the estate inspections held in September and October 2024, which were as follows:

- 19 September – Swavesey – Home Close and Whitton Close
- 24 September – Barrington – Malthouse Way
- 17 October – Waterbeach – Harvey Way, Coronation Close and Chapel Close
- 24 October – Sawston – Lynton Way, Vicarage Avenue, Martindale Way and Uffen Way
- 31 October – Linton – Tower View and Chalklands

The Chair said that previously a more detailed report was included in the pack.

Bronwen Taylor said we had stopped including detailed reports as they contained sensitive information, however, a detailed Issues and Actions report was sent to the Tenant Volunteer Inspectors regularly for their information.

Geoff Clark advised that a senior manager from SP Landscapes would be accompanying us on some estate inspections in 2025. He said it would be advantageous and useful for them to see some of the grounds maintenances issues that were raised at inspections.

Dave Kelleway said that Peter Tye was available if more tenant inspectors were needed.

5. New Matters

5.1 Tenant Scrutiny Project

Julie Fletcher referred to the scrutiny documents included in the pack and said the Regulator was looking for proper scrutiny at councils. She said she had been having conversations with Dave Armitage about bringing a consultant in to assist tenant representatives and to guide them.

The Chair asked if the forms were prescribed.

Julie Fletcher said they were not and could be changed.

Margaret Wilson said that CHS Group was a local independent housing association and she had a contact on their scrutiny panel who would be willing to assist. She reported that at both the conferences she had attended, a large emphasis had been placed on scrutiny. She added that this applied to both Local Authorities and Housing Associations.

Julie Fletcher asked the tenant representatives to look at the forms and to provide Dave Armitage with feedback.

Action: Dave Armitage

5.2 Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report 2023 / 2024

Julie Fletcher referred to the documents included in the pack for information and said that part of the requirement from the Regulator and the Housing Ombudsman was that we got a response to the report from the Lead Member for Housing as well as from the HEB as a collective.

The Chair said that although the “Satisfaction with the landlord’s approach to handling complaints” measure of 29% for “very or fairly satisfied” was not good, this was a national figure and we were not out of kilter.

Julie Fletcher said that nationally this indicator was poor, however over the last year we had done a great deal of work on our complaints process. She said these figures were

from the 2024 Annual Tenant Satisfaction Survey and another survey would be done in January 2025.

Cllr Wilson asked what the response to the survey was as a percentage in accordance to the number of residents and if the numbers reflected that people were more likely to respond if they were not happy with the service.

Julie Fletcher said that the response rate was about 33% which was quite good and that M.E.L, the external consultants who did the survey, said that it was a robust response. She added that she was not sure why the complaints measure was low and that we would need to add another question to the survey to understand this. She said that we had worked really hard since quarter four to increase our response rate and to make sure that we were in line with time scales.

Margaret Wilson said that one big issue was that M.E.L were not consistent in asking the question about “The satisfaction of the repair.” She explained that Mears had been out to Paul Bowman’s house for the same repair job about six times before it was resolved, however, he had only received a satisfaction survey call in connection with the last visit. She said that this would reflect a satisfied customer but what about the previous visits for the same issue where he had not received a call. She said that this was where another question could be added.

Eddie Spicer said that when the Mears contract started, Mears had devised and sent out the customer satisfaction surveys, which the tenant representatives who were involved in the tender process were not happy with. He said that SCDC had invested about £40,000 for an external company to conduct the surveys based on the questions put forward by the tenant representatives. He added that we had made some changes in the background in order to filter the data further to break it down into the types of jobs, etcetera. He said he did not understand where the complaint was coming from.

Margaret Wilson said she was only reporting on what she had been told and that it appeared that M.E.L were only interested in the last visit and not how long it took to do the repair.

The Chair reminded the board that this was in respect of the satisfaction of handling complaints and not about the actual complaint.

Bob Buss asked what we should set the goal to be.

Peter Campbell explained that SCDC went through the Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) and agreed to a set of principles which would set the targets. He said that where

we were performing in the top quartile, we would remain in that, and the TSMs would give us targets that were challenging. He added that we wanted to be as good as three quarters of landlords. He said that what was interesting with surveys was that sometimes people felt obliged to answer questions and that if the numbers were looked at, more people were dissatisfied with the way that we handled their complaints than the number of people who made complaints which meant that there could be other factors influencing this. He added it was a very challenging target to change because it was one of perception rather than a measure of reality.

Julie Fletcher said that the report was presented at the last HEB meeting and the target that we were aiming for in respect of satisfaction of complaints handling was 31%.

Dave Kelleway agreed that further questions were required as this information appeared to be meaningless.

Peter Campbell said that it was a prescribed question which was asked by all landlords and that it was a general industry wide acceptance that councils did worse on this than housing associations. He explained that with a housing association there was only one service, however, with councils there was a range of services which meant that when the survey was done, tenants could be influenced by other services. He said that when we set our targets, we based them on other local authorities and not the wider industry.

Julie Fletchers said that we needed a response from this meeting, in terms of the report, which we would submit to the Housing Ombudsman together with the report.

Dave Kelleway said that we could advise that we would be adding another question which would ask for the main reason on why they were either very satisfied or very dissatisfied.

5.3 National Housing Policy – Update

Julie Fletcher referred to the Briefing Note document included in the pack for information and said that a great deal had happened since the last meeting. She said that some of the items were about the Rents Policy and the Right to Buy Policy and we had received consultation from government. She said that she had met with Dave Kelleway and Ivor Grant for a session on both policies which was very helpful. She added we were in the process of drafting a response which would be sent back to government.

The Chair said that there was a great deal of focus on “Right to buy” however there was a consultation going on at the moment saying that there should not be a right to buy. He added that government had reduced the maximum discount from £102,000 to £34,000

which should reduce the number of right to buy properties. He asked, in principle, should there be right to buy.

Margaret Wilson said that she was not opposed to the right to buy, however she felt that there should be some control on the length of time for a tenant living in a council property, for example 10 years, before being allowed the right to buy.

Dave Kelleway said that there should not be a right to buy as social housing should be used for what it was designed. He said it had created a tremendous amount of homelessness and we desperately needed more social housing. He added that about a third of sold social housing was now being privately rented, which doubled or tripled the rent with worse services.

Julie Fletcher said that the same issues were picked up at the meeting in that a tenant should be invested in a property in terms of having lived there for a certain number of years before being allowed the right to buy. She said that a copy would be circulated once they had completed the draft.

The Chair asked if there was a particular rule that applied to new properties.

Julie Fletcher said that one of the proposals, which we supported, was whether new build properties could be exempt however the question was what we classified as a new build and how long before it was not a new build. She suggested that any dwelling built after 1 April 2025 be exempt from the right to buy.

Peter Campbell suggested that our response be that we would prefer government to stop the right to buy.

A discussion on Right to Buy was held.

5.4 Leasehold Properties Policy

Margaret Wilson said that she had asked for this topic to be included in the agenda pack as she felt that the whole policy as well as the handbook were confusing. She said that there should be a clear policy and that there should be a review of leasehold properties. She referred to the issue of a leasehold property on her estate which was going to wreck and ruin as it had been empty for about seven years.

Geoff Clark asked why she thought the leasehold scheme was not effective and not working.

Margaret Wilson said that there were too many differences on how properties were overseen. She referred to the issue at her estate and explained that there had been an alteration to the property, which was in breach of the lease as there was no record of the alteration, and it was stated in the lease-holders handbook that tenants could not do anything to the property without written permission from the council.

Peter Campbell said that we should ask the Policy Panel if they would want to look at the policy and if so, what priority did they want to give this issue.

Geoff Clark asked if this was a government initiative around supporting leasehold equity share as he understood it to be a local agreement that was set up by this council in 1994. He said he did not believe that there were any other local authorities that operated a scheme such as this one, however, he did support reviewing the policy.

The Chair asked if this policy had been reviewed regularly.

Peter Campbell said that we did look at policies on a regular basis, however, the complication was that we had a range of the different lease agreements and we did not have a process for reviewing each type of lease agreement on a regular basis. He said that as the lease agreements were intended to be permanent arrangements, we would not normally change them.

The Chair asked if the board were happy for the Policy Panel to review this policy to which they all agreed.

Action: Geoff Clark

5.5 Climate and Nature Strategy

Ellie Haines, Development Officer – Climate and Environment, went through a presentation on the Climate and Nature Strategy.

Bob Buss asked how this would tie in with governments plans.

Ellie Haines said that we had to be mindful of what government brought in, however, we had to be in line with local plans.

The Chair asked if this was a part of the planning policy.

Ellie Haines said that it would tie in with the planning policy.

Margaret Wilson asked why they had a broad range of what they were investing in. She asked about electric vehicles and said that they did not store electricity, and that there needed to be care about what was being done.

Ellie Haines said that they always looked at research and guidance and made sure that it fed into the strategy.

Cllr Wilson said that people in Cottenham with allotments had asked for a communal fridge in order to store fresh produce to avoid wasting it.

Ellie Haines said that that was useful to know.

The Chair thanked Ellie Haines for her presentation.

5.6 ARCH Tenants Group Conference Reports

The Chair referred to the reports from Margaret Wilson, Jim Watson and Paul Bowman who attended the ARCH Tenants Group Conference in Rotherham on 3 October 2024 and thanked them for the good reports.

6. Any Other Business

6.1 Annual Allowance

Dave Kelleway said it was good to see councillors at the meeting. He referred to the £400 per annum allowance for elected and co-opted tenant representatives which had been set four years ago, with no provision for any increases, and said that he thought there should be an automatic increase after each election every four years. He proposed that it be increased to £500 and that it be linked to the increase in Councillors allowances.

Julie Fletcher said that the request sounded reasonable.

The Chair said that a debate was always held for Councillors allowances.

Peter Campbell said that members allowances were subject to an independent report and rubber stamping, and for transparency an elected or co-opted tenant volunteers' allowance should also be scrutinised and rubber stamped by an external body, however, he would need to check this with legal.

Action: Peter Campbell

6.2 Repairs Service

Eddie Spicer said that he was disappointed in general with the attitudes and approaches we had been receiving from the tenant representatives in respect of the repairs service. He said he had viewed the video of the TSMs & KPIs Panel meeting held the previous week and he was really disappointed in how it came across, which was very negative and detrimental to the repairs service, and there were a number of comments made that had taken him some time to reply to. He said that the comments were unjust and inaccurate, and he felt they were based on opinions rather than fact or evidence that was available. He said one of the comments made was that the councils wasted money on doing chemical damp proofing injections and he said he could not remember the last time this was done. He said another comment made was that an electrical test had not been done after living in a property for 14 years, however, we had evidence that it had been done as recently as 2022.

Eddie Spicer said that the overall negativity was not helpful and it was putting a lot of pressure on a service that we were trying to deliver, and it was wasting our time answering questions which were raised through opinions and not on facts. He added that he was happy to have a session with tenant representatives to explain what his team did, how they went about tasks, etcetera, so that there was that level of knowledge but what he was not prepared to do was fight back on detrimental comments made, which were not very nice and having a poor effect on our service. He said if this was the attitude and opinion being spread amongst the tenants, then he was not surprised that our surveys were going backwards.

Bob Buss asked if it would help if the tenant representatives had a list of officers, what they did and their contact details, in order to send queries to the correct person.

Julie Fletcher said that we did have a document and we could add more detail as to what each section did. She referred to the online portal system that we tried to set up for tenant representative to submit queries, however, from feedback received, it was a bit awkward to use. She added that if tenant representatives were not sure who to raise a query with, they should email the Resident Involvement team.

Peter Campbell said that very few issues fell solely into one section and could fall across more than one team.

Dave Kelleway said that this was not an unfamiliar issue and agreed that it could be ignorance or inexperience and said that it was no use to get angry but to first ask questions

and make sure that facts were correct. He said that if someone came to him and made accusations without facts, he would not listen to them and we had a right to ignore them.

Margaret Wilson admitted that she was one of the people who did not recall having an electrical test done, however, when she had the gas checked every year, she always received a report of the outcome. She said she had never received a report for the electrical safety test until she questioned it and received one by email a few days earlier. She added that she felt that it was a communication issue and asked why a record of the test was not sent to all tenants.

Eddie Spicer advised that it was not a requirement to send a record of the electrical test.

Julie Fletcher asked about internal training and for thoughts on what we could do better.

Eddie Spicer said that we should provide training on internal processes for tenant volunteers who were on the panels and that one of the issues was the acronyms we used. He said he was more than happy to spend time educating the tenant volunteers on the processes in his team.

Geoff Clark said that he was happy to support training tenant volunteers on what an officer's role was.

Peter Campell said that all new members were given a presentation and he suggested that we repeat that for new tenant representatives.

Action: Julie Fletcher

7. Meeting Date for 2024 / 2025

The Chair referred to the meeting date for 2024 / 2025 as follows:

- 27 March 2025 (Virtual on Teams)

8. Closing

There being no further business to discuss, the Chair thanked everyone and wished them a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. The meeting ended at 3.45pm.

3.1 Matters Arising the Meeting held on 12 December 2024

Item 3.1.1 – Action : Geoff Clark to follow up with the Accountant regarding producing more detailed statements relating to communal rooms.

Report back: To be considered separately as part of the Communal Room Charging Policy.

For noting.

Item 3.1.3 – Action: Bronwen Taylor to set up a meeting to discuss the changes needed to be made to the Co-option Policy and Terms of Reference documents.

Report back: A meeting was held on 27 February 2025 and the documents were amended as per the changes proposed by Dave Kelleway.

Added to the agenda as item 4.5.

Item 4.1 – Action: Julie Fletcher to include an additional column in the Forward Plan with the “Outcomes” and remove the “Together with Tenants Charter” topic.

Report back: The Forward Plan has been amended.

For noting.

Item 4.4 – Action: Dave Armitage to look at what options were available for minutes to be taken at panel meetings other than by tenant representative panel members.

Report back: To trial the Co-pilot application as part of the Microsoft upgrade.

For noting.

Item 5.1 – Action: Tenant representatives to look at the draft scrutiny forms and provide Dave Armitage with feedback.

Report back: Scrutiny item on agenda as item 4.6.

Item 5.4 – Action: Geoff Clark to arrange a meeting for the Policy Panel to meet to review the Leasehold Properties Policy.

Report back: Added to policy review program.

For noting.

Item 6.1 – Actions: Peter Campbell to check the process for increasing the elected and co-opted tenant representatives' annual allowance with legal.

Report back: The annual allowance has been increased to £500 and will be reviewed each year to be aligned with members increases.

For noting.

Item 6.2 – Actions: Julie Fletcher to arrange for the document with officers' details to be updated and circulated to all tenant representatives, and to arrange sessions on officers' roles.

Report back: The document with officers' details has been updated and was presented to the tenant representatives at the New Members Induction Day on 4 June 2025. A copy was included in the induction pack.

For noting.

4. New Matters

4.1 Anti-social Behaviour Policy

The Anti-social Behaviour Policy, included in the pack, was presented to Cabinet on 24 June 2025 for approval. The policy was approved subject to any minor amendments made by the HEB.

The approved copy of the policy can be found on this page [Housing policies and strategies - South Cambs District Council](#) of our website.

Julie Fletcher to report.

Report to:	Housing Engagement Board 10 July 2025
Lead Cabinet Member:	Councillor John Batchelor – Lead Member for Housing
Lead Officer:	Peter Campbell – Head of Housing

Anti-Social Behaviour Policy (Relating to Council Tenants and Leaseholders)

Executive Summary

1. The purpose of this report is to agree the Anti-Social Behaviour Policy (Relating to Council Tenants and Leaseholders). The policy is set within the context of relevant legislation and sets out the Council’s responsibilities as a local housing authority. Whilst the policy is new, it does not change existing procedures but aims to provide a comprehensive document as to how we deal with Anti-Social Behaviour in our council properties and to ensure we comply with the new Consumer Standards (Neighbourhood and Community Standard) of the Social Housing Regulation Act 2024.

Recommendations

2. The Housing Engagement Board is asked to note the 2025 Anti-Social Behaviour Policy (Appendix A), approved by Cabinet on 24 June 2025, with minor amendments delegated to the Lead Member for Housing based on any feedback from the Housing Engagement Board.

Details

3. As a landlord, we have a duty, under the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003, to respond to anti-social behaviour (ASB) affecting the properties we manage. These responsibilities are separate to those that affect the wider community which are dealt with by the Safer Communities Team and / or Environmental Health.
4. Under the new Consumer Standards (Neighbourhood and Community Standard) of the Social Housing Regulation Act 2024, registered housing providers must have a policy setting out their approach as to how they tackle anti-social behaviour and hate crime in the neighbourhoods where they provide social housing.
5. Anti-social behaviour is defined as ‘Conduct that has caused, or is likely to cause, harassment, alarm or distress to any person’. It can be a range of unacceptable

behaviours, from everyday incidents such as noise nuisance to serious criminal acts. The term 'hate crime' is any criminal offence which is motivated by hostility or demonstrates hostility towards the victim's disability, race, religion, sexual orientation or transgender identity.

6. The policy aims to clarify the different roles within the Council that deal with anti-social behaviour and sets out the process and tools available to the Housing Service when dealing with such issues. Action taken will be proportionate to the severity of the anti-social behaviour and we will always look to reach a fair and lasting solution as quickly as possible. However, cases are often complex in nature and can be linked to other safeguarding issues, such as domestic abuse or other welfare concerns, or where the alleged perpetrator is vulnerable and may be in need of support themselves.
7. Reports of anti-social behaviour are treated seriously, with the Housing Service having a dedicated Enforcement Team who are qualified and trained to deal with difficult and complex situations. Cases are dealt with in a sympathetic and professional manner, taking into consideration individual circumstances and factoring in any safeguarding concerns.

Reasons for Recommendations

8. It is a requirement that the Council has a Policy setting out its approach to how we will deal with anti-social behaviour and hate crimes.

Options

9. The alternative option would be to reject the Anti-Social Behaviour Policy (Relating to Tenants and Leaseholders) 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.

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:-

Equality and Diversity

11. An Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken and no adverse impacts have been identified. All reports of anti-social behaviour will be dealt with fairly and sympathetically, taking into account individual circumstances. There is specific reference

within the policy to 'hate crime' which is used to describe a range of criminal behaviour where the perpetrator (who could be a stranger, friend or family member) is motivated by hostility or demonstrable hostility towards the victim's disability, race, religion, sexual orientation or transgender identity. Therefore, the policy has positive outcomes relating to those with protected characteristics.

Health and Wellbeing

12. When dealing with anti-social behaviour issues, this often identifies more complex issues such as those suffering from mental ill-health, drug / alcohol misuse or safeguarding issues. The Enforcement Team are trained to deal with these situations and will liaise with appropriate agencies where further support is needed.

Consultation responses

13. The Anti-Social Behaviour Policy has been developed in consultation with the Policy & Procedure Panel which consists of tenant representatives and officers. The tenant representatives were keen that detailed information as to the process and the various tools that can be used should be part of the Policy. These have therefore been included at the end of the Policy as an Appendix.
14. The policy has been shared with the Communities Manager and the Service Manager in People Protection Planning at SCDC.
15. The Policy will also be considered by the Housing Engagement Board at its next meeting on 10 July 2025, with any minor amendments being included as approved by the Lead Member for Housing under delegated authority.

Alignment with Council Priority Areas

Housing that is truly affordable for everyone to live in

16. The Policy aims to support those living in our council properties that may experience anti-social behaviour.

A modern and caring Council

17. The policy acknowledges the impact that anti-social behaviour can have on our tenants and leaseholders and details how the Housing Service will deal with such reports.

Background Papers

None.

Appendices

Appendix A: Anti-Social Behaviour Policy (Relating to Council Tenants & Leaseholders)

Report Author

Claire Gilbey – Housing Enforcement Team Leader

Martyn Hilliam – Housing Policy Officer

Telephone: (01954) 713 000

4.2 Housing Service Plan

Julie Fletcher to report on the Housing Service Plan, which is included in the pack.

If you would like a copy of the plan, please email the [Resident Involvement](#) team.

Report to:	Housing Engagement Board (HEB) 10 July 2025
Lead Officer:	Peter Campbell – Head of Housing

Housing Service Plan for 2025 – 2026

Recommendations

1. That the Housing Engagement Board (HEB) note the Housing Service Plan for 2025 – 2026, as set out at Appendix A, identifying any additional key priorities / challenges to be included for this year and / or to support the development of next years' Service Plan and budget priorities.

Reasons for Recommendations

2. Final sign-off of the Service Plan is the responsibility of the Head of Service, Peter Campbell, before publication to the Corporate Management Team. Whilst this is primarily an internal document that each service area completes annually, it is important that the Housing Engagement Board feed into its development relating to the landlord services and have oversight of progress. It should be noted that the Service Plan covers all functions of the Housing Service, not just those relating to our responsibilities as a housing landlord.

Purpose

3. The purpose of the report is to acknowledge the current service plan and to discuss what key priorities and challenges the housing service faces over the next year. This will form initial discussions for the preparation of the development for the next Service Plan and budget setting for 2025 / 2026. Many of the priorities will remain the same as for this year based on the approved Asset Management Strategy, with a key focus on the impacts of the cost-of-living crisis, working towards net zero carbon targets and energy efficiency of our homes and meeting new regulatory requirements.
4. At a strategic level, the Housing Engagement Board are asked to consider whether there are any further key priorities that the service should take into account and whether there are any key actions not already identified.
5. Any additional priorities will need to be considered in the context of budgetary constraints.

Details

6. The [Corporate Plan](#) sets out the overall objectives for the Council, which in turn have an influence on the priorities and actions within the Housing Service Plan. Service Plans are also an opportunity to highlight the key projects and challenges for each service area and the relationship between departmental inter-dependencies.
7. The Service Plan is a standard template used for all services. The document is internally focussed and may therefore be of a technical nature, the detail of which is not presented in a way for general publication. The Service Plan is split into four sections.
8. Section 1 sets out the service vision, mission and background. The vision has been taken from the approved Housing Asset Management Strategy which is also relevant to the whole Housing Service. It sets out the five primary functions of the Housing Service as well as providing a brief overview of the financial budgets overall.
9. Section 2 gives a brief highlight of some of the main accomplishments over the last year and what lessons have been learnt.
10. Section 3 sets out the delivery plan as to how the Housing Service will contribute to the Corporate Plan priorities, as well as setting out our business-as-usual service delivery and key activities.

Background Papers

Appendices

Appendix A: Housing Service Plan for 2025 – 2026

Report Author

Julie Fletcher: Service Manager – Housing Strategy

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4.3 Housing Service – Annual Complaints Report and Self-Assessment Form

Julie Fletcher to report on the Housing Service – Annual Complaints Report and Self-Assessment Form, which are included in the pack.

If you would like a copy of the above documents, please email the [Resident Involvement](#) team.

Report to:	Housing Engagement Board 10 July 2025
Lead Cabinet Member:	Councillor John Batchelor – Lead Member for Housing
Lead Officer:	Peter Campbell – Head of Housing

Housing Service – Annual Complaints Report 2024 / 2025 and Self-Assessment of the Complaints Code of Conduct

Executive Summary

1. The purpose of this report is for the Housing Engagement Board to note the Annual Complaints Report for 2024 / 2025 at Appendix A and the Complaints Code: Self-Assessment Form at Appendix B. These documents relate to the Housing Service and form part of the submission requirements by the Housing Ombudsman.

Recommendations

2. It is recommended that the Housing Engagement Board notes both appendices and provides a response to the Annual Complaints Report for 2024 / 2025 at Appendix A, as part of the Council’s submission to the Housing Ombudsman.

Details

3. The Housing Ombudsman’s new Complaint Handling Code became a statutory requirement from 1st April 2024 and sets out the expectation placed on social landlords of how they deal with and manage complaints within their service areas.
4. The Complaints Handling Code requires social landlords to undertake a self-assessment of how well the organisation conforms with the Regulator’s Code of Guidance on dealing with complaints relating to its landlord service. As part of the requirement, the self-assessment must be approved by the landlord’s governing body (namely Cabinet).
5. The self-assessment indicates that we are in compliance with the code. The Housing Complaints Policy was integrated with the Council’s corporate complaints policy in 2021 and whilst there are some subtle changes to the Housing Code, our current policy is more challenging:

- a. The code states that stage 1 complaints should be acknowledged within five working days of the complaint being received. Our current policy states that we will acknowledge within three days from receipt.
 - b. The code states that landlords must issue a full response to stage 1 within 10 working days of the complaint being **acknowledged**. Our current policy states 10 working days from **receipt**.
6. Similar changes relate to stage 2 complaints and the Council may wish to consider aligning our policy with the Housing Code when it is next reviewed in 2026.
7. Housing providers are also required to produce an annual complaints performance report which must be reported to its governing body as well as published to residents, along with a response from the governing body, and submitted to the Housing Ombudsman.
8. The report must include:
 - a qualitative and quantitative analysis of the landlord's complaint handling performance
 - a summary of the types of complaints the landlord has refused to accept
 - any findings of non-compliance with the Housing Ombudsman's Code
 - improvements made as a result of the learning from complaints
 - its actions following any reports and publication from the Ombudsman in relation to the work of the landlord.
9. Performance monitoring is reviewed quarterly at the Housing Services Performance Management meetings. Prior to the requirements of the Housing Ombudsman, overall performance of the housing service was monitored as a whole service and therefore the Annual Report includes both landlord and non-landlord functions. However, for the purposes of the Housing Ombudsman, the report has been separated out into the two housing functions of the Council.
10. Complaints responded to within the Complaint Handling Code timescales is below the Council's target set of 95%; currently at 62.8% for stage 1 complaints and 93.8% for stage 2. Whilst it should be recognised that the numbers are relatively low and may represent timescales exceeding by one or two days, this is an area that needs significant improvement. The Complaints Code allows for requesting an extension of time when additional investigation is needed, and we should utilise this option more effectively. Additional staff have also been recruited to help alleviate some of the pressures facing the housing service and greater scrutiny at a senior level has been introduced.

11. In terms of stage 3 complaints, we received one Housing Ombudsman and one Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman determination in 2024 / 2025 relating to the housing service. Neither of these resulted in any failings by the Council and no recommendations for improvement were received.
12. Generally, many of the complaints received relate to poor communication where we have not provided the customer with appropriate updates or responded in a timely manner. To improve how the Housing Service communicates, during 2024 we published the [Communications Charter](#) and held all-staff sessions relating to the importance of communication. Following this, a set of guidelines for staff has been developed to ensure we have a consistent approach as to how we communicate. As part of 1-2-1s and team meetings, we will continue to embed the Charter into our day-to-day communications.

Options

13. It is a requirement by the Housing Ombudsman to publish both the annual report and self-assessment. Therefore no alternative options are put forward.

Implications

14. 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 Risk

15. The Housing Ombudsman and the Social Housing Regulator work together under the new powers set by the Social Housing Regulation Act. Therefore, non-compliance with the Housing Ombudsman will influence any action taken by the Social Housing Regulator who may impose financial penalties if the Council cannot demonstrate that it is meeting the requirements set out in the Act.

Legal

16. Under the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023, housing landlords must comply with the requirements set out by the Social Housing Regulator and the Housing Ombudsman.

Staffing

17. The Social Housing Regulator Act imposes new regulatory responsibilities for the Council. In order to ensure we are able to meet these new requirements, additional resources will be built into the service where necessary.

Risks / Opportunities

18. As part of the Social Housing Regulation Act, the Social Housing Regulator will inspect all large social housing landlords within a 4-year period. As part of the inspection, the Regulator will publish their judgements as to how well social housing landlords are meeting the standards. It is therefore critical that the Council has a robust performance monitoring mechanism in place as part of its self-assessment of its service delivery.

Equality and Diversity

19. The Consumer Standards under the Social Housing (Regulation) Act promote equality by ensuring that tenants are safe in their homes, are listened to and that social landlords are accountable to tenants and treat them with fairness and respect.

Climate Change

20. N / A.

Consultation responses

21. Scrutiny of the performance of the Council's landlord service is reviewed quarterly through the TSM & KPIs Tenant Panel.

Alignment with Council Priority Areas

Housing that is truly affordable for everyone to live in

22. The new Consumer Standards as part of the Social Housing Regulation Act are designed to protect tenants and improve the service they receive.

Background Papers

Appendices

Appendix A: Housing Annual Complaints Performance Report 2024 / 2025.

Appendix B: Complaints Code of Conduct: Self-Assessment Form

Report Author:

Julie Fletcher – Service Manager, Housing Strategy

Telephone: (01954) 713 352

4.4 Tenant Satisfaction Measures Annual Report

Julie Fletcher to report on the Tenant Satisfaction Annual Measures report, which is included in the pack.

This report can be found on this page [Housing performance and tenant satisfaction measures - South Cambs District Council](#) of our website.

Report to:	Housing Engagement Board 10 July 2025
Lead Cabinet Member:	Councillor John Batchelor – Lead Member for Housing
Lead Officer:	Peter Campbell – Head of Housing

Tenant Satisfaction Measures Annual Report

Executive Summary

1. The purpose of this report is for the Housing Engagement Board to note the 2024 / 2025 Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) set out at Appendix A, which are required to be submitted annually to the Housing Regulator and published by the Council.
2. In 2024, Cabinet agreed targets against the new measures based on benchmarking information available from similar social housing landlords and / or where previous targets have been set by the Council. These targets were set to ensure the Council is on track to either maintain or improve its service.
3. This is the second year of reporting the TSMs, allowing for comparisons with last year's performance and the established targets.

Recommendations

4. It is recommended that the Housing Engagement Board notes the tenant satisfaction measures set out at Appendix A, to be submitted to the Regulator by the end of June 2025.

Details

5. The Social Housing Regulator monitors social housing providers using data returns of a range of indicators and inspections, with indicators being returned annually, and each organisation being inspected every four years or so.
6. The Regulator promotes strong governance and is therefore keen that performance information is reported to the relevant boards, so in the case of South Cambridgeshire District Council this will be Cabinet, and we will also seek the input from Tenants through the Housing Engagement Board and the TSM & KPI tenant panel. This information will also be published on the Councils website.

7. Once further benchmarking information is available later in the year, we will review the targets set to ensure these are still challenging and realistic against other housing providers performing within the top quartile. Any proposed changes will be brought back to Cabinet for further consideration, in consultation with the Housing Engagement Board.

Housing Performance and tenant satisfaction measures

8. There are 22 tenant satisfaction measures, covering five themes:
 1. Keeping properties in good repair
 2. Maintaining building safety
 3. Respectful and helpful engagement
 4. Effective handling of complaints
 5. Responsible neighbourhood management
9. The first 12 of the measures are classed as tenant perception measures and have been identified by way of a tenant satisfaction survey. The survey has prescribed questions set by the Regulator and was undertaken in January 2025 by an independent research company using both postal and on-line methods. The survey was sent to all 5,383 tenants, with 1,189 tenants responding. This equates to a response rate of 22% which gives us a margin of error of +3% at the 95% confidence level. Note that some of the survey information presented at Appendix A (indicators beginning with TP) may not sum to 100, this is due to rounding.
10. Of the tenant perception measures, there have been a number of statistically significant uplifts since last year, namely satisfaction that the Council listens and acts on tenants' view (+10%), the way the Council handles complaints (+11%), and most notably satisfaction with the way the Council handles anti-social behaviour (+14%). Given these were areas of lower satisfaction in 2023 – 2024, this is a move in a positive direction.
11. The majority of the 12 tenant perception measures have either seen an upward trend or remained stable. There are two measures that fall below the target:
 - a. TP09: Agreement that the landlord treats tenants fairly and with respect. 74% of tenants state that they are very or fairly satisfied against a target of 75%. Whilst satisfaction has slightly increased by 1% from 2023 / 2024, it still falls short of the target. During 2024 / 2025, good communication has been a key theme throughout the service, with a Communications Charter being introduced and guidelines for staff recently produced. Over the coming year, this will be factored into inductions for new staff and through the appraisal process.

- b. TP10: Satisfaction that the landlord keeps communal areas clean and well maintained. 67% of tenants state they are very or fairly satisfied against a target of 70%. This puts the Council in the median quartile of 65% when compared to other social housing landlords last year. Over the coming year, this is an area that the housing service will look to improve in its performance through working with tenants to develop a communal areas policy.
- 12. The remaining 10 measures look at the performance of landlords based on the prescribed methodology by the Regulator.
- 13. In terms of the building repairs and safety measures, all targets have been met.
- 14. A separate complaints report was considered by Cabinet at its June meeting as a requirement of the Regulator, alongside consideration by the Housing Engagement Board. No target has been set for the number of complaints received, as this reflects our aim to make reporting easier, so an increase in numbers may counter intuitively reflect better performance.
- 15. However, CH02: Complaints responded to within Complaint Handling Code timescales is below the target set of 95%; currently at 62.8% for stage 1 complaints and 93.8% for stage 2. Whilst it should be recognised that the numbers are relatively low and may represent timescales exceeding by one or two days, this is an area that needs significant improvement. The Complaints Code allows for requesting an extension of time when additional investigation is needed, and we should utilise this option more effectively. Additional staff have also been recruited to help alleviate some of the pressures facing the housing service and greater scrutiny at a senior level has been introduced.
- 16. As with the number of complaints received, no target has been set for NM01 relating to the number of anti-social behaviour cases relative to the size of the landlord. Whilst the housing service has seen an increase in numbers from 2023 / 2024, again numbers remain relatively low and are comparative to other social housing landlords last year.

Options

- 17. The performance measures are prescribed by the Social Housing Regulator and must be published. Therefore no alternative options are put forward.

Implications

- 18. 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 Risk

19. The Social Housing Regulator may impose financial penalties if the Council cannot demonstrate that it is meeting the requirements set out in the Consumer Standards, which includes measuring performance against the standard Tenant Satisfaction Measures.

Legal

20. There are no legal implications to produce targets to measure ourselves against. However, it is considered good practice to set targets to provide a focused approach to service improvement against the best performing organisations within our peer group.

Staffing

21. The Social Housing Regulator Act imposes new regulatory responsibilities for the Council. In order to ensure we are able to meet these new requirements, additional resources have been built into the service where necessary.

Risks / Opportunities

22. As part of the Social Housing Regulation Act, the Social Housing Regulator will inspect all large social housing landlords within a 4-year period. As part of the inspection, the Regulator will publish their judgements as to how well social housing landlords are meeting the standards. It is therefore critical that the Council has a robust performance monitoring mechanism in place as part of its self-assessment of its service delivery.
23. Prior to submission of the TSMs, we have asked internal audit to review the data to ensure that our systems and processes for collecting the data are robust.

Equality and Diversity

24. The new standards promote equality by ensuring that tenants are safe in their homes, are listened to and that social landlords are accountable to tenants and treat them with fairness and respect.

Climate Change

25. N / A.

Consultation responses

26. A separate briefing session was held in June 2025 with the HEB and other tenant representatives to present the results of the tenant satisfaction survey. The briefing session was provided by the consultants who undertook the survey, providing more detail of the findings.

Alignment with Council Priority Areas

Housing that is truly affordable for everyone to live in

27. The new Consumer Standards as part of the Social Housing Regulation Act are designed to protect tenants and improve the service they receive.

Background Papers

Appendices

Appendix A: Tenant Satisfaction Measures Annual Report 2024 / 2025

Report Author:

Julie Fletcher – Service Manager, Housing Strategy

Telephone: (01954) 713 352

4.5 Co-option Policy and Terms of Reference

The Co-option Policy and Terms of Reference documents are included in the pack for approval.

Dave Armitage to report.

South Cambridgeshire District Council (SCDC)

Housing Engagement Board (HEB)

Elected Tenant / Residential Leaseholder Representative (ETR)

Co-option Policy

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

When a vacancy arises

- 1) A vacancy that arises for an ETR during the term of office shall, providing there is at least six months remaining of that term at the date that the vacancy occurs, be filled by means of this Co-option policy.

If there are less than six months remaining of the term, then the vacancy will remain unfilled until the next election.
- 2) Following the vacancy arising, SCDC will inform all ETR's that the co-option process has been instigated.
- 3) As soon as practicable, SCDC will advertise the vacancy for a period of four weeks, as widely as possible, to include where possible the Council's website, social media, council magazines, press releases and any other available media.
- 4) Tenants / residential leaseholders from anywhere in the district shall be invited to apply, but it will be made clear that priority for co-option will be given to candidates who are resident in the same area as the vacancy, except for the residential leaseholder. Only residential leaseholder applicants will be considered for a residential leaseholder vacancy.
- 5) Candidates will be invited to submit an application form and personal statement, in the same manner as for the normal tenant / residential leaseholder representative elections.

Receipt of Applications

- 6) Following the receipt of applications, the following will apply:

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

If there are qualified application / s from the area covered by the vacant seat **(excluding residential leaseholders)**:

- a) If there is only one qualified application from the area covered by the vacant seat, then that applicant will be declared duly elected.
- b) If there is more than one qualified application from the area covered by the vacant seat, then there will be a vote at a special meeting of ETR's to determine the successful candidate from those applicants.

If there are only qualified application / s from areas **not** covered by the vacant seat **(excluding residential leaseholders)**:

- c) If there is only one qualified application from an area not covered by the vacant seat, then that applicant will be declared duly elected.
- d) If there is more than one qualified application from an area not covered by the vacant seat, then there will be a vote at a special meeting of ETR's to determine the successful candidate.

For vacancies relating to residential leaseholders:

If there is only one qualified application regardless of where the residential leaseholder lives in the district:

- e) Then that applicant will be declared duly elected.

If there is more than one qualified application regardless of where the residential leaseholder lives in the district:

- f) Then there will be a vote at a special meeting of ETR's to determine the successful candidate.

Special meeting of ETR's

- 7) If a special meeting of the ETR'S is required, this will be held as soon as practicable after the deadline for nominations, with officers endeavouring to find a date and time when the maximum number of ETR's can attend.
- 8) If the vacancy is the residential leaseholder seat, then qualified residential leaseholder applicants from all areas will be considered equally, as the seat represents residential leaseholders from the whole district.

- 9) Copies of all relevant applications and candidate statements will be circulated to all ETR's at least five working days before the special meeting.
- 10) Applicants shall not be required to attend the meeting, but shall be invited to do so with at least five working days' notice, to give a short presentation on why they feel that they should be co-opted on to the HEB.
- 11) SCDC shall provide a clerk for the meeting who shall produce minutes of the decisions taken.
- 12) The quorum for the meeting shall be three ETR's, the meeting shall be open to the public and applicants may attend the whole of the meeting. Only ETR's may vote.
- 13) The ETR's present at the meeting shall elect a chair for the meeting from among their number.
- 14) The chair shall invite each applicant in turn to make a presentation lasting no longer than five minutes, followed by an opportunity for the ETR's present to ask questions of the candidate.
- 15) When this process is concluded, the ETR's can discuss the applications, without interruption from candidates or others.
- 16) When discussion is concluded, voting by the ETR's will take place by secret ballot, administered by the clerk to the meeting.
- 17) The successful candidate must achieve a majority vote of those ETR's present and voting, so if there are more than two candidates for one vacancy and none of them at the first count has an overall majority, then the candidate with the fewest votes should be eliminated and the remainder put to the vote again. This process should be repeated as necessary until one candidate has an overall majority.
- 18) If, after exhausting the above process, the last two candidates are tied on the same number of votes, then the successful candidate will be chosen by lot, conducted by the clerk to the meeting.
- 19) After voting is concluded, the Chair will declare the successful candidate duly elected to the HEB.

Note: If there is a qualified candidate, then an appointment **MUST** be made.

South Cambridgeshire District Council (SCDC)

Terms of Reference for the Housing Engagement Board (HEB)

Please note: The term “Tenant” is used throughout this document as a generic term and includes both council tenants and council residential leaseholders.

1. Purpose

The purpose of the HEB is to represent tenant and residential leaseholders’ interest in relationship to the development and performance of the Housing Services (HS). The HEB will work at a strategic level to scrutinise and be consulted on key issues that affect the HS. Feedback from the HEB will be considered as part of the decision-making process in line with the Council’s constitution.

2. The objectives of the HEB are to scrutinise and make recommendations for improvement for the housing service on behalf of all service users

- To be a critical friend, recommending improvements for the HS.
- To ensure the Council delivers a high standard HS.
- That the HS is fair, equitable and tenant friendly.
- That tenants’ priorities are represented, and their views are an integral part of the decision process.
- HS service ambitions are achievable, within budget and resources.
- HS service offers value for money.
- HS meets government regulatory standards.
- HS reflects the Council’s business plan’s objectives.

3. The Role of the HEB

- To ensure strategic decisions are in line with HEB objectives.
- To review housing policy and finance issues and make recommendations where appropriate.
- To scrutinise the housing service’s plans and policies

- Input into the setting and monitoring of targets and performance indicators for housing.
- To feed into the development of the annual service plan and the Annual Report for tenants.
- Work with other tenant groups, including task and finish groups, to improve services and help review objectives and aspirations.
- Represent SCDC tenants to outside persons and organisations.
- Elected tenant board members to act as the Chairperson for their Area-based tenant Forum.

In doing the above the HEB will ensure that consideration is given to value for money, available resources and the corporate objectives of SCDC.

4. Membership

4.1 The HEB will consist of:

- the Cabinet Lead Member for Housing (or a nominated substitute in their absence).
- two councillors nominated by the two main political parties of the Council.
- the Head of Housing (a non-voting member) (or a nominated substitute in their absence).
- seven elected tenant representatives made up of two from the North Area, two from the East Area, two from the West Area and one residential leaseholder.

4.2 Tenant Representatives to the HEB will be elected every four years by the tenants.

4.3 Tenant Representatives will be tenants or residential leaseholders of SCDC or their recognised spouse / partner (as per SCDC). Tenants in breach of their tenancy conditions will not be eligible to be or remain as a Board Member.

4.4 The Head of Housing and the Lead Cabinet Member for Housing at SCDC will be permanent members of the HEB.

4.5 The normal term of office for tenant representatives will be four years; however, should a tenant representative leave before the end of term, a new tenant representative will be co-opted according to the current Co-option Policy document.

4.6 HEB members, except for the Head of Housing, the Lead Cabinet Member for Housing and councillors, who fail to attend two consecutive full HEB board meetings and fail to provide any apologies will forfeit their membership of the Board, unless, due to extenuating circumstances agreed otherwise by the HEB. If extenuating circumstances

cannot be provided by councillors for their absence, their attendance will be escalated to their political party who will be asked to provide the HEB with a new member.

- 4.7 HEB members agree to use digital communications including video conference, shared facilities which may include MS Teams or a central document library. Meetings will be held either online or face to face. Assistance and training will be provided as requested.
- 4.8 HEB members agree to make available contact details with colleagues to facilitate work between meetings.
- 4.9 HEB members will attend training sessions where appropriate and where possible.

5. Quorum

- 5.1 A quorum will be at least 50% of the board, for example, if membership is seven, a minimum of four members would be required and must include either the Head of Housing or a Councillor.
- 5.2 Inquorate meetings should be noted, and recommendations ratified at the next quorate meeting.

6. Chairing Meetings

- 6.1 The Chair will normally be the Lead Cabinet Member for Housing.
- 6.2 The Vice-Chair will be an elected tenant representative unless none are available, in which case any HEB member can be appointed by the HEB.
- 6.3 The Vice-Chair nomination will be agreed by the seven elected tenant representatives unless none are willing to stand.
- 6.4 The Chair and Vice-Chair will be elected every 12 months.
- 6.5 The Vice-Chair will deputise for the Chair in their absence.

7. Frequency of HEB Meetings

- 7.1 The HEB will meet quarterly with a minimum of four quarterly meetings per year.
- 7.2 The Resident Involvement Team will provide secretariat support for the HEB.
- 7.3 The Resident Involvement Team will liaise with officers and relevant others as necessary to plan for forthcoming meetings. Any member can request to add additional items to the agenda. These should be submitted at least four weeks before the meeting.
- 7.4 The HEB will be provided with supporting documents a minimum of one week prior to each meeting.

- 7.5 HEB members will read any material provided prior to attending the meeting.
- 7.6 Minutes of the HEB meetings will be made available within four weeks of the meeting.
- 7.7 To meet the demands of projects and reviews, one off meetings may be called at short notice, if deemed necessary.
- 7.8 The HEB may establish Task and Finish Groups to lead on specific activities.
 - 7.8.1 Task and Finish Groups could be internal tenant groups or external groups
 - 7.8.2 Task and Finish Groups must report to the HEB at an agreed frequency

8. Code of Conduct

- 8.1 HEB members will be compliant with SCDC's Equality and GDPR policies.
- 8.2 HEB members agree to abide by the Code of Conduct.
- 8.3 HEB members will be required to sign the Code of Conduct.

9. HEB Elections

- 9.1 Elections will be held every four years.
- 9.2 Elections will be administered by an independent organisation.
- 9.3 Any current tenant or residential leaseholder, meeting candidate criteria, can run for election.

10. HEB Support

- 10.1 Administrative support for the HEB will be provided by the Resident Involvement Team.
- 10.2 All new members will be provided with a handbook of key documents and undertake an induction programme and training.
- 10.3 Training requirements will be assessed and relevant training will be provided as and when needed in line with current regulation.
- 10.4 All elected tenant and residential leaseholder representatives will be eligible for an annual allowance of £500 (which will be aligned from 1st April 2025 and annually thereafter in line with increases awarded to councillors' allowances) for sundries, plus an additional amount for expenses such as travelling costs and additional support for baby-sitting / carers costs. The annual allowance will be paid in two equal instalments twice a year, six months in arrears. The additional expenses should be claimed monthly.

- 10.5 All tenant and residential leaseholder representatives will be eligible for a meal allowance, in line with the council's subsistence and travel allowance policy, when attending conferences.

11. Access to Information

- 11.1 The HEB can request additional data, reports and information to carry out their activities.
- 11.2 Where appropriate information is not readily available, the HEB may request information reports (appropriate in scale and content of the performance review and subject to available resources) and / or invite officers or managers to meet with the HEB to provide additional information or insight.
- 11.3 All requests for information and evidence must be made via the Resident Involvement Team.

12. Accountability

- 12.1 The HEB meetings will be publicised on the website.
- 12.2 Minutes and meeting papers will be made available to the public on the SCDC website.
- 12.3 The HEB will approve an annual report for tenants which will include input from the elected tenant representatives.

13. Reviewing the Terms of Reference

- 13.1 These Terms of Reference were approved by John Batchelor, Lead Member for Housing, and Peter Campbell, Head of Housing for SCDC, and ratified at a meeting of the HEB held on the:

Approved: 20 December 2021

Reviewed: _____

- 13.2 The Board will review the terms of reference regularly to ensure they reflect the duties and responsibilities of the Board.

Next review: _____

4.6 Empty Properties Re-let Standards Scrutiny Project

Dave Armitage to report.

4.7 Mock Inspection of the Housing Service

Peter Campbell to report.

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	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	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 [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 [Previously 27 March 2025]	Service Plan	To review the service plan for 2025 / 2026	Julie Fletcher	Housing Engagement Board / Lead Member for Housing	-
21 July 2025 [New]	Annual Complaints Report & 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	-
21 July 2025 [New]	Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs)	To note the submission of the annual TSMs	Julie Fletcher	Cabinet – 24 June 2025	-

Date of Meeting	Topic	Description	Lead Officer	Decision Route	Outcomes
September 2025 [Previously June 2025]	Assignment and Succession Policy (existing policy)	To note / provide further comments on the Assignment and Succession Policy following tenant consultation through the policy panel. Linked policy / procedure to Tenancy Policy	Julie Fletcher	Housing Engagement Board / Lead Member for Housing	-
September 2025 [Previously June 2025]	Communal Areas Policy (new policy)	To note / provide further comments on the Communal Areas Policy following tenant consultation through the policy panel	Geoff Clark	Housing Engagement Board / Lead Member for Housing	-
September 2025 [New]	Asset Management Strategy (existing)	Review and update of the existing Asset Management Strategy	Eddie Spicer	Cabinet – October 2025	-
September 2025 [New]	Compensation Policy	To note / provide further comments on the Compensation Policy following tenant consultation through the policy panel	Martyn Hilliam	Housing Engagement Board / Lead Member for Housing	-
September 2025 [New]	Repairs Policy	To note / provide further comments on the Repairs Policy following tenant consultation through the policy panel	Martyn Hilliam	Housing Engagement Board / Lead Member for Housing	-
September 2025 [New]	Pets Policy	To note / provide further comments on the Pets Policy following tenant consultation through the policy panel	Martyn Hilliam	Housing Engagement Board / Lead Member for Housing	-

Date of Meeting	Topic	Description	Lead Officer	Decision Route	Outcomes
November 2025 [New] Likely to be a separate briefing session	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	-
December 2025 [Previously] 27 March 2025]	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	Housing Engagement Board / Lead Member for Housing	-
December 2025 [Previously] June 2025]	Empty Property Re-let Standards	Project group being set up with tenant representatives 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	-
December 2025 [New]	Compliance Safety Policies	To note / provide further comments on the compliance safety policies following tenant consultation through the policy panel	Martyn Hilliam	Cabinet	-
January 2026 Separate session outside of HEB for tenant representatives [New]	Budget Update	To review the budget position for 2026 / 2027	Peter Campbell	Cabinet	-

5.2 Contracts Review Panel

A meeting to review and discuss the ground's maintenance contract was held on 11 June 2025.

Geoff Clark to give an update.

5.3 Policy and Procedure Panel

Anti-social Behaviour Policy

A meeting to discuss the suggested amendments to the Anti-social Behaviour Policy was held on 7 January 2025. The notes from the meeting are included for noting.

If you would like a copy of the notes, please email the [Resident Involvement](#) team.

Pets Policy

A draft copy of the Pets Policy was circulated to all tenant representatives on 27 May and 5 June 2025 to provide feedback. Martyn Hilliam is in the process of collating the responses.

To be presented at the September 2025 HEB meeting for approval.

5.4 Tenant Satisfaction Measures and Key Performance Indicators Panel – Quarter 4 / Annual Reports

Notes from the meeting held on 10 June 2025 are included for noting.

Tenant Satisfaction Measures and Key Performance Indicators Panel

Notes of the Quarterly Meeting held on 10 June 2025 from 2pm to 4pm (on Teams)

In Attendance: Peter Campbell – SCDC

Geoff Clark – SCDC

Grace Andrews – SCDC

Dave Armitage – SCDC

Margaret Wilson – Tenant Volunteer (Chair)

Amy Stocks – Tenant Volunteer

Ivor Grant – Tenant Volunteer

Laura Nelson – Tenant Volunteer

Michael Luffman – Tenant Volunteer

Patti Hall – Tenant Volunteer

Vivienne Till – Tenant Volunteer

Introductions made by Dave Armitage – Everyone had met everyone else bar Ivor so he introduced himself to the new members of the panel.

Grace gave an overview of the performance with annual reports for 2024 to 2025 to the members.

When discussing Mears's performance, Margaret asked why there was a dip in satisfaction.

Peter explained that they were recruiting due to being short staffed and now have more people on the ground in vans so there should be an upturn in performance going forward.

Margaret asked if the tenant satisfaction survey questions could be amended – Peter stated that he would look into this but was unsure if amending agreed questions would come at a greater cost.

Margaret asked if automatic emails count as a response when going through the complaint's procedure – Grace advised that this was not the case.

Margaret asked if there could be more clarity on what a response is within the complaints procedure and asked if a general proposal of timescales could be added – Grace explained that we are working to the government standards required of us but more information could be made available if necessary.

Peter then explained a general outline of response / timescales could not be set in stone as some works take longer than others to resolve a complaint, for example extensive works within a property.

Grace finished the reporting and Peter explained to the new members that although the meeting might seem heavy going, it will become clearer and their understanding will increase with the more time spent serving as a tenant representative.

The meeting was then ended.

6. Any other Business

Any additional issues to be raised.

7. Meeting Date for 2025 / 2026

- 25 September 2025 (Teams meeting / venue to be confirmed)
- 11 December 2025 (Teams meeting / venue to be confirmed)
- 26 March 2026 (Teams meeting / venue to be confirmed)

8. Closing