

Housing Engagement Board

Minutes of the Quarterly Meeting

held on Monday, 21 July 2025

from 2pm to 4pm

in the Monkfield Room, South Cambridgeshire Hall, Cambourne

- Attendees:** Cllr John Batchelor – Chair
Cllr Eileen Wilson (on-line)
Peter Campbell (SCDC – Head of Housing)
Amy Stock (Elected Tenant Representative)
Jim Watson (Elected Tenant Representative)
Laura Nelson (Elected Tenant Representative) (on-line)
Margaret Wilson (Elected Tenant Representative)
Michael Luffman (Elected Tenant Representative)
Vivienne Till (Elected Tenant Representative)
Pattie Hall (Elected Residential Leaseholder 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) (on-line)
Bronwen Taylor (SCDC – Resident Involvement Officer) – Minute taker
- Apologies:** Cllr Heather Williams
Dave Armitage (SCDC – Resident Involvement Team Leader)

1. Welcome and Apologies

The Chair welcomed everyone to the first meeting of 2025 at 2.03pm. He especially welcomed the new members of the board to their first meeting.

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

2. Quorum and Appointment of Vice-Chair

The meeting was quorate.

The Chair asked for nominations for a Vice-Chair.

Mike Luffman nominated Vivienne Till who was seconded by Amy Stock.

No other nominations were received.

3. Minutes of previous Meeting – 12 December 2024

The Chair referred to the minutes of the meeting held on 12 December 2024.

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.

3.1.1 Item 3.1 – Matters Arising from previous Meeting 26 September 2024

Item 3.1.1 – Matter Arising from meeting held on 8 July 2024

Item 3.1.1 – Matter Arising from meeting held on 28 March 2024

Income and Expenditure Statements in Communal Halls

Action: Geoff Clark to follow up with the Accountant regarding producing more detailed statements.

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

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

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.

This item has been added to the agenda as item 4.5.

3.1.3 Item 4.1 – Forward Plan

Action: Julie Fletcher to include an additional column with the “Outcomes”.

Report back: The Forward Plan has been amended to include the additional column.

For noting.

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

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.

3.1.5 Item 5.1 – Tenant Scrutiny Project

Action: The tenant representatives to look at the draft scrutiny forms and provide Dave Armitage with feedback.

Report back: This item has been added to the agenda as item 4.6.

3.1.6 Item 5.4 – Leasehold Properties Policy

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

Report back: This policy has been added to the policy review program.

For noting.

3.1.7 Item 6.1 – Annual Allowance

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.

3.1.8 Item 6.2 – Repair Service

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

Julie Fletcher referred to the documents included in the pack and said that the policy was set within the context of relevant legislation and sets out the Council’s responsibilities as a social housing provider. She said it was approved by Cabinet on 24 June 2025, however, was now being presented for comments and minor amendments, which could be approved by the Chair.

Brian Burton said that it had been discussed at length and he was satisfied with the changes made.

Margaret Wilson suggested adding that tenants could report issues to their tenant representatives.

Julie Fletcher said that tenant representatives should encourage tenants to report through the proper channel as this would leave an audit trail. She added that urgent issues should be reported directly to the police.

Eddie Spicer suggested training for tenant representatives in dealing with anti-social behaviour.

Margaret Wilson referred to point 10.2, second bullet point in the policy, and suggested changing the wording “non-council tenant” to “anyone not a council tenant” to avoid misinterpretation by “clever lawyers”.

Margaret Wilson referred to Appendix A – point 1.1 and asked if there was a way to cross-reference the complaints to identify patterns, such as the same victim making complaints about different people.

Geoff Clark confirmed that there was a system to cross-reference complaints and this would be clarified in the policy.

Margaret Wilson asked who was responsible for the behaviour of children living at the property.

Peter Campbell confirmed that under the tenancy agreement tenants were responsible for the behaviour of all members of their household.

Action: Julie Fletcher

4.2 Housing Service Plan

Julie Fletcher referred to the documents included in the pack and said that the Housing Service Plan for 2025 – 2026 was a document for internal use only. She said it included actions that focused on key priorities from the corporate plan and challenges facing the housing sector, such as the cost-of-living crisis and compliance with new regulatory requirements.

Margaret Wilson referred to the following pages in the plan:

- **page 46**, point 3 and asked if the financial year should read 2026 / 2027 and not 2025 / 2026

Julie Fletcher said that this would be corrected.

- **page 47**, point 3 and said that it should read three sections and not four sections

Julie Fletcher said that this would be corrected.

- **page 50**, point 4 – Housing New Build and asked if councils were allowed to build council houses or did they have to work in conjunction with housing associations

Peter Campbell said that we did build our own houses.

Julie Fletcher referred to page 56, Accomplishments, which reported on the number of new build council houses delivered.

- **page 53**, Contribution to capital financing in the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and said that she assumed that all revenue from rent was ringfenced for maintenance

Peter Campbell advised that it was not ringfenced and said that it was a revenue contribution to capital outlay and money could not be put aside from revenue. He

suggested that Martin Lee, the Housing Accountant, go through the HRA account with tenant volunteers.

The Chair referred to the Accomplishments on pages 56 and 57 and said that this was a huge achievement.

Action: Julie Fletcher

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

Julie Fletcher referred to the documents included in the pack and said that the Regulator of Social Housing required Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) to be published. She said that the majority of complaints were related to repairs, which is expected as it reflects the main area of interaction with our tenants and aligns with national trends. She said that with regards to complaints generally, efforts were being made to improve response times and communication with tenants.

Peter Campbell explained that our complaints performance was not good as we were not closing them off properly, however, the process was being reviewed.

Margaret Wilson said that most complaints were about the website as they could not trace the complaint made.

Peter Campbell explained that this report was in relation to our statutory requirements and that complaints were looked at in separate meetings.

4.4 Tenant Satisfaction Measures Annual Report 2024 – 2025

Julie Fletcher referred to the documents included in the pack and said that we were required to submit this report to the Housing Regulator annually. She explained that in 2024 Cabinet agreed targets against the new measures based on benchmarking information available from similar social housing landlords and from previous targets that had been set by the Council. She said that our overall performance had improved.

The Chair said that these results were a perception by tenants.

Mike Luffman asked how we perceived our target.

Julie Fletcher advised that we used HouseMark benchmarking data from top quartile social housing landlords (that is, the highest performances) to help set our targets.

A discussion on the report was held.

4.5 Co-option Policy and Terms of Reference

Julie Fletcher referred to the documents included in the pack and said that changes, which included the structure and the annual allowance of the HEB, had been discussed at the previous board meeting. She said that the document had been amended accordingly and required approval.

The Board approved the Co-option Policy and Terms of Reference Documents.

4.6 Empty Properties Re-let Standards Scrutiny Project

Eddie Spicer said that they would be forming a scrutiny group to look at the process followed when a property became empty. He said that we would visit an empty property to understand the costs and what was required to get it back to a high standard.

Julie Fletcher said that Dave Armitage would lead on the project and he would contact all tenant representatives and set up a meeting to discuss the process to follow. She added that the tenant representatives would produce a report on their findings at the end of the project.

Action: Dave Armitage

4.7 Mock Inspection of the Housing Service

Peter Campbell advised that all social housing providers would be having an inspection by the Housing Regulator and in preparation for this, we have appointed Housing Quality Network (HQN) to conduct a mock inspection in September / October 2025. He said the purpose of the mock inspection was to identify weaknesses, flaws and risks.

The Chair asked if we would be getting input from tenants.

Peter Campbell said that tenants would be involved by way of focus groups or interviews.

5. New Matters

5.1 Forward Plan 2024 / 2025

Julie Fletcher referred to the Forward Plan included in the pack and explained the purpose of the document. She went through the items planned for the coming months and said that if members of the board wished to add an item, to let her know.

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 10 June 2025. He said that he had sent out a copy of our new service standard document in respect of the maintenance contract this morning for the panel to review. He added that the next contract that was to be renewed and reviewed was the Lifeline Contract.

Jim Watson asked why the grass was being cut when it was not necessary due to it being so dry.

Geoff Clark explained that they were contracted to conduct 12 cuts a year, however, we could look at adapting this to the weather.

Margaret Wilson asked if the landscaping maps were up to date yet.

Geoff Clark said that this was an ongoing exercise which was looked at and changes were being made if necessary.

Jim Watson asked if there was a dedicated person to look at maps to which Geoff Clark said that there was.

5.3 Policy and Procedure Panel

Brian Burton advised that the panel had successfully reviewed various policies and that the next meeting would be held on 30 July 2025 where the Communal Room Charging Policy, the Estate Inspection Policy and the Estate Inspection Procedures would be discussed.

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

Margaret Wilson advised that a meeting was held on 10 June 2025 to discuss the annual TSMs and KPIs results and she referred to the notes of the meeting included in the pack.

Amy Stock raised the issue of the late postal notification from Mears regarding confirmation of annual gas checks appointments.

Eddie Spicer asked Amy Stock to send him the examples she had received from tenants.

Action: Amy Stock

6. Any Other Business

6.1 New Telephone System

Patti Hall advised that she had tested the new AI telephone system as she wanted to pay a bill however it had not been successful as her call was mis-routed.

Julie Fletcher said that she would make the team aware of the issue.

7. Meeting Date for 2025 / 2026

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

- 25 September 2025 (venue to be confirmed)
- 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 3.39pm.