

Tenant Scrutiny Meeting

Monday 11th August 2025, 10:00am at Springwell Gardens Community Centre

Attendees

David Ramsden, Winnie Billups, Mary Jacques, Jo Workman, Keith Stringer, Barry Dealey, Tim Pharo, Rose Jones, Simon Thorne, Phil Hayes, Caroline Hubbard, Rachel Cole, Rob Gooding, Rebecca Morrison, Laura Swift

1	Welcome, introductions and apologies David welcomed everyone to the meeting. There were no declarations of interest. Apologies have been received from Ann Hitchens and Madi Jackson. Panel members should complete a declaration of interest form for this investigation. Panel Members should all claim their travel expenses.	
2	Minutes and Actions from Last Meeting Rebecca reported that they were unable to send out a reminder for the survey as it was sent out to a random sample last time so we wouldn't be able to target those who didn't respond last time. Barry's reported repairs on his account have been cleared the last repair reported was approximately 12 months ago. TPAS reward information was sent to Rebecca from Tonia. This can be circulated with the panel after the meeting.	
3	Quarterly Review of previous investigations Lettable standards – Caroline Hubbard Dean Borrill has sent Caroline an email update. The tenancy termination letters are being reviewed, the tenancy termination procedure was signed off at the end of July and Dean is hoping for the letters to be finished by the end of the month. Caroline will update the panel at the next meeting on whether this is complete, this is the only action left outstanding. The screen team will be looking at the letters once complete. New tenancy support – Sandra Wardle In-person viewings alongside the videos were trialled for 2-weeks in June. Questionnaires were distributed and 8 responses were recorded. The results were that tenants welcomed being able to view the property in person along with the video. Carol is liaising with neighbourhoods for the welcome pack, which is going to the customer experience board.	Caroline

	<p>Sandra's colleague, Phil is trying to get in touch with Speak-Up for the furnished homes video, the furnished homes policy is also being re-written. Sandra will speak to Phil and get an updated expected completion date.</p> <p>Tenancy health checks – Levi Karigambe The action plan went to the Improving Places Select Committee and was approved. Some recommendations are now complete.</p> <p>A new name for tenancy health checks was selected by the tenant engagement pool, the new name will be 'Your Tenancy Review' which is the name originally suggested by the panel. Documents are being updated to reflect this.</p> <p>Information for tenancy health checks in the 'guide to your home' is being updated, changes will be implemented in the new year.</p> <p>Information on 3rd party advocacy services are being added to letters.</p> <p>New digital forms are being created for tenancy health checks for officers. After speaking with the IT team National Insurance numbers must be kept as a form of ID as it is a unique identifier.</p> <p>Instead of moving the 'prefer not to say' option on the tenancy health check forms training will be used to support officers in asking sensitive questions.</p> <p>The frequency of checks is once every four years, but more frequent if the tenant is vulnerable or if they have been highlighted as requiring more frequent checks.</p> <p>The new digital tenancy health check forms will ask whether the property is suitable and whether any adaptations will be necessary in the future.</p> <p>Everything should be completed by March 2026, the service has been working with many other teams such as IT.</p> <p>Overcrowding is to the discretion of the officer performing the checks.</p> <p>Phil suggested keeping these topics on the quarterly updates agenda item but getting a quick email update as all three of these no longer require full updates and are close to sign off. Feedback from officers on attending meetings for updates would also be beneficial.</p>	
4	<p>Best we can be action plan review</p> <p>Recommendation B – Recruitment</p> <p>Buddies Guidance that has been written on the roles of buddies was shared with the panel. Thank you to Barry for your work on this. Barry, Jo and Mary have volunteered to be buddies for new members. Barry suggested training on how to effectively get information from the people we are supporting, this would be useful for buddies to allow them to provide better support. Tim and Rose said someone helping along the way would be beneficial. How to buddy up with people who are joining online would be something that needs to be investigated.</p>	

	<p>Trial period David suggested not to have a fixed amount of time for the trial period as it would depend on the tenant and instead have 'until the person feels comfortable'. 3-6 months is too fixed and rigid.</p> <p>For monitoring we could include checking in a minimum of every 3 months for new members – one of the team will chat with the new member unless requested sooner by that member.</p> <p>Incentives Stockport Housing and Platform Housing are both in favour of incentives. Stockport rewards members with a £25 voucher at the end of an investigation. Platform Housing gives members £5 per hour up to the value of £250 annually.</p> <p>Social activities/engagement is of interest to the panel. Phil will put together a proposal.</p> <p>The panel will discuss when we produce the 'What we have achieved' leaflets and what is written into them going forward at the next meeting.</p> <p>There is no Improving Places Select Committee date for this exercise.</p>	Phil
5	<p>Online repairs</p> <p>The survey results are available to view. It was sent out to 500 tenants at random and 38 responses were received.</p> <p>A large number of tenants had used the online reporting system (43%), of these 41% had used it in the last month, 45% of people said it was easy or very easy to use, 50% used some form of guidance, 45% used no guidance and 5% can't remember, everyone who could remember used their own device and 50% used a phone to complete their online repair report. 77% of people found the opening screen ok or easy to understand, some comments include 'can't report if smoke alarm is going off', 'the last time the page was unavailable' and 'difficult to use so gave up'. 73% of people managed to book an appointment, 81% of people who booked an appointment said it was for a suitable date and time, 81% of people received a text to confirm their appointment, 100% of those who didn't receive a text said they would have liked one. 36% would prefer the repair to be left on the system for 1 year.</p> <p>50% of those who have not used the reporting online system prefer to speak to someone over the phone, only 2 people didn't have access. Some comments include 'it is difficult', 'can't get in', 'didn't know it existed' and 'tried but ended up phoning'. 22% said they would accept help to use the system.</p> <p>The panel discussed receiving texts to confirm appointments, Tim and Barry have both received texts to confirm their appointments, but Jo hasn't, the panel discussed whether this could be related to the contracting partners as Tim and Barry receive repairs from Equans whilst Jo receives repairs from Mears.</p> <p>As many people used their phone to complete the repair it would be important for any new system to be optimised for phone use.</p>	

David reported that a system time-out message is displayed but this is only displayed after the time-out, there is no warning beforehand.

Previously online repair reporting was a webform, this took up a lot of officer time however tenants tend to have preferred this method and found it easier than the current system.

A suggestion for the report could be to make it clear how to contact the Council for a tenant responsibility repair.

The repairs log for Jo goes back to January 2024 and goes forward to 2050. There seems to be varying accounts of when the repairs go back to.

Recommendations

The recommendations were discussed and decided.

Recommendation 1

Extend the time before the online form times out or put a warning on the front page to let people know that it will time out if they don't keep working on the form. Make sure that there is a warning on the system telling people that it will time out soon.

Recommendation 2

Have a save button to prevent people from losing access.

Recommendation 3

Extend the period of time for repairs to remain included on the platform to 12 months to allow for people to refer back to them if there are any complaints or follow ups needed. Or provide an archive for tenants as well.

Recommendation 4

Consider signing people up for Housing Online and showing them the repairs part of the system at their sign-up meeting.

Recommendation 5

Review how many appointments are available online with the view to increase this number

Recommendation 6

Provide a way you can cancel or change appointment times, without phoning, within the online system. Equans gives the opportunity to change the appointment time with a text message, and other Councils offer a webform which can be used to change appointments.

Recommendation 7

Provide a better way of notifying people of appointments. Make it so that you don't have to log into your account to view appointments.

Recommendation 8

Regularly update tenants on any changes to the emergency repairs categories list, increase understanding for tenants on what can be reported.

Recommendation 9

Add to the tenants responsibilities that these depend on disability/ age of tenant i.e. replacing lightbulbs!

	<p>Recommendation 10 Make it clear about there being an option to pay the council to carry out the repairs that are your own responsibility (it includes this on the website, but not on the reporting system)</p> <p>Suggestion 1 Review the pictures and wording used on the system and include an 'other' section.</p> <p>Suggestion 2 Arrange for more promotion of the platform and potentially offering some support to people who would like to learn how to use the online reporting tool.</p> <p>Suggestion 3 When seeking a new platform for reporting repairs, ensure that it is suitable mobile phone app friendly.</p> <p>'These are in order of priority' will be removed from reports going forward.</p>	
6	<p>Next topic choice</p> <p>Housing officer availability and understanding of their role was raised as a topic choice from the tenants' connectors pool.</p> <p>It was discussed whether the panel wanted to look at communal areas/estate management or Housing Officer availability.</p> <p>It was decided for the next topic to be estate management whilst receiving information in the background on housing officers' roles in preparation of the next review.</p>	
7	<p>Planning for the Next Meeting</p> <p>Online repairs will be ready to sign off at the next meeting. we will be scoping out the next topic – estate management. We will also be looking at the 'be the best we can be' review.</p>	
8	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>None.</p>	
	<p>Next meeting date</p> <p>The next meeting will be on Monday 8th September 2025, 10:00am at Springwell Gardens Community Centre and online on Microsoft Teams.</p>	