



Housing Performance Panel

Quarterly Meeting

8 September 2022 – 13:00 to 16:00

Agenda Pack

Housing Performance Panel Agenda

Date: **Thursday, 8 September 2022**

Time: **13:00 – 16:00**

Venue: **Zoom (Virtual Meeting)**

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1. Welcome and Apologies

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

2. Quorum

A quorum shall consist of 50% of members.

3. Minutes of the Meeting held on 8 June 2022

The minutes of the meeting held on 8 June 2022 are included for approval.

Housing Performance Panel

Minutes of the Quarterly Meeting held on Wednesday, 8 June 2022 from 13:00 to 16:00 via Zoom

Attendees:	<p>Peter Campbell (Head of Housing) – Chair</p> <p>Cllr John Batchelor</p> <p>Brian Burton</p> <p>Les Rolfe</p> <p>Patricia Hall</p> <p>Elaine Phillips (Mears)</p> <p>Geoff Clark (SCDC – Service Manager – Tenancy and Estates)</p> <p>Eddie Spicer (SCDC – Service Manager – Housing Assets)</p> <p>Grace Andrews (SCDC – Data Quality and Improvement Team Leader)</p> <p>Bronwen Taylor (SCDC – Resident Engagement Officer) – Minute taker</p>
Apologies:	<p>Paul Bowman</p> <p>Jennifer Perry (Resident Involvement Team Leader) – Vice Chair</p>

Item	Subject	Action
1.	<p>Welcome and Apologies</p> <p>Peter Campbell welcomed everyone to the meeting at 13:00.</p> <p>Apologies were received from Paul Bowman and Jennifer Perry.</p>	-
2.	<p>Quorum</p> <p>The meeting was quorate.</p> <p>Bronwen Taylor advised that there were two vacancies on the panel. She explained that Margaret Wilson had resigned in June 2021 and Ffion Daniel had resigned after the last meeting. She said she had sent emails to potential tenant representatives asking if they would like to join the panel and had received interest from two tenants. She added that she</p>	B Taylor

Item	Subject	Action
	had asked each of them for a short statement as to why they were interested in joining the panel, which she would circulate to the panel.	
3.	<p>Minutes of previous meeting – 2 March 2022</p> <p>The Chair referred to the minutes of the meeting held on 2 March 2022. They were approved by the panel as a true reflection of the meeting.</p>	-
4.	Matters Arising	-
4.1	<p>Mears Group – Review of Quarter 3 Data (Item 5.1)</p> <p>Geoff Clark included a report in the agenda pack showing the research SCDC had conducted on the work that was done in empty properties.</p>	-
4.2.	<p>SCDC – Review of Quarter 3 Performance Data (Item 5.2)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Grace Andrews removed the RAG status from the B&B spend on the performance reports as requested. 2. Elaine Phillips advised that they had raised a “Service now” ticket with Mears IT to look into the issue, as there was no obvious reason as to why Paul Bowman did not receive survey texts as his details were on the system. 	-
4.3	<p>SCDC – Comparison of Quarter 3 Complaints Data (Item 5.3)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Grace Andrews provided a document with examples of complaints received. 2. Elaine Phillips advised that an introduction meeting had been held with Jade Slater and Grace Andrews, and fortnightly meetings had been arranged with Grace Andrews, Eddie Spicer and Liam Flatters. 	-

Item	Subject	Action
4.4	<p>Data Collection (Item 7.1)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Eddie Spicer had requested the panel to provide meaningful questions which he would discuss under item 5.4. 2. Grace Andrews sent a list of the questions from the STAR survey to Eddie Spicer. 3. Geoff Clark advised that we have been looking at Orchard to ensure we capture and record any communication difficulties our tenants and leaseholders may have. He reported that we then shared this data with Mears and other approved contractors with a monthly update so that the information can be recorded onto their mutual systems. 	-
4.5	<p>Proposed Meeting Dates (Item 8)</p> <p>Bronwen Taylor re-scheduled the 2 June 2022 meeting, as it was a bank holiday, to 8 June 2022.</p>	-
5.	<p>Standing Items</p>	-
5.1.	<p>Mears Group – Review of Quarter 4 Data</p> <p>Elaine Phillips, from Mears, presented the Mears Group Quarter 4 Data report and said that she was disappointed that there were not more “green” Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), but this was due to an outbreak of covid in their branch which affected their delivery.</p> <p>Cllr Batchelor asked what was being done about the KPIs, given that we would be mobilising shortly and transitioning to the new contract, and how that would happen.</p> <p>The Chair said that Eddie Spicer would cover this in item 5.4 of the agenda.</p> <p>Brian Burton asked if a review from the Progress meeting would be given at the next HPP meeting.</p> <p>Elaine Phillips said that it would be shared at the next HPP meeting.</p>	-

Item	Subject	Action
5.2	<p>SCDC – Review of Quarter 4 Performance Data</p> <p>Grace Andrews went through a presentation on the Performance Data for Quarter 4, highlighting the key indicators that had either increased or declined. She said they were trying to reduce the B&B costs.</p> <p>The Chair said that the net indicator for B&B was misleading during the period of covid and Heather Wood was looking for an alternative indicator, for example, the average length of time in a B&B which may be more meaningful in the future.</p> <p>Grace Andrews said that the Re-let of Housing Stock had reduced in quarter 3 but increased in quarter 4 due to various reasons, such as Christmas, covid cases and the weather conditions.</p> <p>Les Rolfe asked if the 26 days average was for the quarter or for the month of March.</p> <p>Grace Andrews confirmed 26 days was the position we were at in March and that the average for the quarter would be higher.</p> <p>Cllr Batchelor said that we were looking at this in relevance of the target of 17 days and taking into account that there was a lot of work that went into relets, he said that he felt that the target was too low. He added that they were reviewing the target.</p> <p>Brian Burton asked where the 17 days target came from.</p> <p>Grace Andrews said that a previous manager had set the target. She added that after data cleansing, it was revealed that the targets had not been met.</p> <p>Geoff Clark reported that he had been looking at data over the past few months and said that our stock profile contained a lot of sheltered housing compared to other landlords. He said that due to this, and because of tenants either going into care or passing away, our turnover was very high. He said he would share the findings of his report.</p>	G Clark

Item	Subject	Action
	<p>Eddie Spicer said that there would be a much wider range of KPIs in the new contract and that they could be introduced to this meeting.</p> <p>Grace Andrews reported that the Satisfaction with Response Repairs was still not in target, but had improved in quarter 4. She said that this was another KPI that they were reviewing and they would be amending the way it was reported. She explained how Mears collated their responses when they changed to SMSs using a 1 – 10 scale system, which was the same scale that was used by House-Mark, and that SCDC would also be using this system going forward. She added that although it was not in target, it had improved in quarter 4, and we were on a par with other organisations.</p> <p>Eddie Spicer said that every month he gets a breakdown from Mears which reflects all the results, scoring and comments that were made. He added there were usually a few low number scores which people assumed was the top score, as there were really good comments, but they were reflected as unsatisfactory. He said Mears reported them as low scores, however, if they went through the data and amended the scores, the average would go up by about 1%.</p> <p>Cllr Batchelor said his concern was the sample size, as it was not 100% of jobs completed because we did not have the contact details of all tenants, and the returns were less than 20% which did undermine the value of the numbers.</p> <p>Eddie Spicer said the numbers going out were increasing month by month therefore the details were becoming more accurate and the return rate was increasing. He added that we would never achieve 100%, however we would be happy to reach a 25% return.</p> <p>Grace Andrews reported that we were within target for Rent Arrears and that we were 100% compliant for “Uncompliant Gas Installations”.</p>	

Item	Subject	Action
5.3	<p>SCDC – Comparison of Quarter 4 Complaints Data</p> <p>Grace Andrews went through the Complaints and Compliments Data for Quarter 34 and said that we were back on target for quarter 4. She said that last year the Housing Ombudsman introduced a code which SCDC had to complete each year.</p>	-
5.4	<p>Update on the Repairs Contract</p> <p>Eddie Spicer advised the report went to Informal Cabinet on 6 June 2022, and had done well, and although some comments had been made, there was nothing to worry about. He said that it would be going to Full Cabinet on 13 June 2022 when a decision would be made and he was confident that we would get the result that we wanted. He added that he was getting a mobilisation project team together for the background work and the KPIs would be one of the points they would be looking at.</p> <p>The Chair said that the report published on the website was split in two, and they were the report and an appendix. He explained that the appendix was not available as it contained extracts of the submissions from the contractors, however, the tenant representatives who were involved in the scoring process would have seen it.</p>	-
5.5	<p>Estate Inspections Report</p> <p>Bronwen Taylor advised that estate inspections had restarted and referred to the Estate Inspection report for April 2022 for noting.</p>	-
5.6	<p>Update on Tenant Satisfaction Survey Project (STAR)</p> <p>Bronwen Taylor referred to the document included in the pack and said that the survey results were currently being analysed and the draft report was expected shortly. She said that MEL Research would give a presentation of the results to both HPP and HEB members in July 2022.</p> <p>Les Rolfe commented that the response rate of 37% was very good.</p>	-

Item	Subject	Action
6.	New Matters	-
6.1	<p>Forward Plan</p> <p>Bronwen Taylor referred to the Housing Engagement Board Forward Plan for information purposes. She added that this was a working document.</p>	-
6.2	<p>Projects for 2022</p> <p>The Chair said that Eddie Spicer was setting up a number of project groups which had fallen out of the Asset Management Strategy and Stock Condition Survey, and would involve tenant representatives.</p> <p>Eddie Spicer advised that everyone concerned had been advised of the projects.</p>	-
7.	<p>Any other Business</p> <p>None</p>	-
8.	<p>Proposed Meeting Dates</p> <p>The Chair referred to the proposed meeting dates for 2022 / 2023, as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 8 September 2022 ➤ 1 December 2022 ➤ 2 March 2023 	-
9.	<p>Closing</p> <p>There being no further business to discuss, the meeting ended at 13:58.</p>	-

4. Matters Arising from previous Minutes

4.1 Quorum (Item 2)

Action: Bronwen Taylor to circulate the statements of the two new applicants to the panel.

Report back: Bronwen Taylor circulated the statements on 28 June 2022. She had an introductory meeting with the two new members, Denise Bach and Eleni Koutso, on 5 August 2022.

For noting.

4.2 SCDC – Review of Quarter 4 Performance Data (Item 5.2)

Actions: Geoff Clark to share the findings of the Empty Properties Statistics report.

Report back: The Empty Properties Statistics – November 2021 – October 2022 report was emailed to the panel on 3 August 2022.

For noting.

5. Standing Items

5.1 Mears Group – Review of Quarter 1 Data

Elaine Phillips to report.

Mears April 2022 - June 2022

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)	Target	Q1	Q2	Comments & Benchmarking where available
	2022 / 2023	April - June	July - September	
% of responsive repair jobs completed within their timescales - Emergency	98%	958 / 965 99.27%		
% of responsive repair jobs completed within their timescales – Routine	95%	1,080 / 1,226 88.09%		
% of appointments kept	95%	1,800 / 1,897 94.89%		
% repairs completed at the first visit	85%	1,766 / 1,869 94.49%		
Average number of days to complete a responsive repair	12	12.67		
% all re-lets completed on time	95%	71 / 75 94.67		

5.2 SCDC – Review of Quarter 1 Performance Data

Grace Andrews to report.

Affordable Homes Performance April to June 2022 / 2023

Trend against target: **Red** = outside target; **Amber** = within Intervention **Green** = within target

Trend on previous quarter: Improved; Declined; Maintained

Housing Options & Advice; Housing Management & Property Services; Housing Strategy Services; Housing New Build Developments

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)	Targets are 2021 / 2022 awaiting update for 2022 / 2023 targets	Q1 Performance April – June	Trend	Comments & Benchmarking where available
AH212 – £s Spend on B&B Monthly (cumulative)	See targets Appendix 1 Actual spend per quarter	April – £8,969 (HB £5,240) May – £21,133 (HB £12,357) June – £45,980 (HB £13,380) = £32,600 (target TBC)	-	See Appendix 1
New – Number of households with family commitments who have been accommodated in B&B for longer than 6 weeks	(Target = 0, Intervention = 1)	0	-	
AH215 – % Successful Homeless preventions as a proportion of all homelessness cases closed (year to date)	50%	57.9%		-
SH375 – Average SAP (EPC) rating of self-contained general needs dwellings Quarterly	70.00	77.65 (EPC rating C)		See Appendix 1
AH211 – Average days to re-let Housing stock Monthly	17 days or less	April – 28 days May – 34 days June – 33 days (average for the quarter 32 days)		

Affordable Homes Performance April to June 2022 / 2023

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)	Targets are 2021 / 2022 awaiting update for 2022 / 2023 targets	Q1 Performance April – June	Trend	Comments & Benchmarking where available
Numbers of re-lets Housing stock Quarterly (Linked to PI above AH211)	N / A	April – 13 May – 11 June – 8 (average for the quarter = 11)	-	-
AH204 – % satisfaction with responsive repairs Quarterly	97% or above	April – 91% May – 92% June – 96% (average for the quarter 93%)		See Appendix 1
SH332 – % Emergency repairs attended within 24 hours – Monthly	98% or above	April – 100% May – 99.15% June – 98.6% (average for the quarter 99.25%)		-
AH224 – Number of new build council house completions – (year to date)	42 at year end	15	-	-

Affordable Homes Performance April to June 2022 / 2023

Trend against target: **Red** = outside target; **Amber** = within Intervention **Green** = within target

Trend on previous quarter: Improved; Declined; Maintained

Housing Options & Advice; **Housing Management & Property Services;** **Housing Strategy Services;** **Housing New Build Developments**

Local Performance Indicators (LPis)	Targets are 2021 / 2022 awaiting update for 2022 / 2023 targets	Q1 Performance April – June	Trend	Comment
AH216 – Number of households assisted through Shire Homes Lettings – Cumulative – Quarterly (year to date)	40	4 Self-contained 1 HMO = 5	-	-
SH336 – Uncompliant gas installations Monthly	100%	April – 100% May – 100% June – 100%	Green	-
SH352 – % traveller pitch fee collected Monthly	90%	April – 82.6% May – 81.8% June – 86.5% (average for the quarter 83.63%)	Amber	-
SH363 – % vacant but available to let Quarterly	0.50%	0.97%	Red	-
Number of vacant but available to let Quarterly (linked to PI above SH363)	-	52	-	-
SH364 – % vacant but unavailable (Annual)	0.50%	-	-	-
Number of vacant but unavailable (Annual) (Linked to above PI SH364)	-	-	-	-
SH368 – % rent arrears Quarterly	2.00%	1.96%	Amber	-

Affordable Homes Performance April to June 2022 / 2023

Local Performance Indicators (LPis)	Targets are 2021 / 2022 awaiting update for 2022 / 2023 targets	Q1 Performance April – June	Trend	Comment
SH369 – % rent loss from empty houses (cumulative)	3.00%	1.77%		-
£ spent on rent loss from empty houses (cumulative) (Linked to PI above SH369)	Estimated Annual Debit £ to be confirmed	£140,291	-	-
SH376 – % tenants satisfied with the re-let service (year to date) Quarterly	85% or above	100%		-
SH374 – % non-decent council homes Quarterly	5.00%	4.87%		-
SH344 – % Customer satisfaction with the condition of new home (year to date) Quarterly	85% or above	100%		-
SH327 – % of repair appointments kept Monthly	95% or above	April – 94.47% May – 94.74% June – 95.52% (average for the quarter 94.91%)		-
SH330 – % routine repairs within target timescales – Monthly	95% or above	April – 87.98% May – 86.75% June – 89.73% (average for the quarter 88.15%)		-
HS3 Number of parishes exploring the potential for delivering affordable housing on exception site	Quarterly T 10; I 6	See comment	-	See Appendix 2

Affordable Homes Performance April to June 2022 / 2023

Housing Options & Advice; Housing Management & Property Services; Housing Strategy Services; Housing New Build Developments

Management Info	Frequency	Q1 2022 / 2023 April – June	Comment
AH210 – Total number of presentations including advice only cases	Quarterly	307	-
AH213 – Number of Homeless applications	Quarterly	115	-
AH208 – Number of Homeless preventions	Quarterly	55	-
AH214 – Number of Homeless acceptances	Quarterly	22	-
AH203 – Numbers in temporary accommodation	Quarterly	65	-
AH219 – Number of properties within Shire Homes – Cumulative	Quarterly	2 Self-contained 0 HMO = 2	-
AH217 – Number of cases where Universal Credit is a factor	Quarterly	0	-
AH218 – Numbers on the housing register	Quarterly	1,816	-
AH220 – Number of lettings to Band A	Quarterly	53	-
AH221 – Number of lettings to Band B	Quarterly	55	-
AH223 – Number of HRA properties that have been empty for over 4 months	Quarterly	6	See Appendix 3
HS1 Number of homes granted planning permission for essential local workers	Quarterly	0	-
HS2 Number of homes granted funding via Combined Authority	Quarterly	0	See Appendix 3
HS4 Number of new affordable homes on rural exception sites given planning permission each year	Annually	22	See Appendix 3

Affordable Homes Performance April to June 2022 / 2023

Management Info	Frequency	Q1 2022 / 2023 April – June	Comment
HS5 Number of new affordable homes built on rural exception sites each year	Annually	0	-
HS6 Percentage of planning consultations responded to within 21 days	Quarterly	86%	See Appendix 3
HS7 Number of households supported to improve the energy efficiency of their home through Housing Repairs & Adaptation Grants (Cumulatively)	Quarterly	See comment	See Appendix 3
HS8 Number of tenant hours volunteered for tenancy engagement	Quarterly	See comment	See Appendix 3
HS9 Number of services changed, implemented, or withdrawn during the year as a result of resident involvement	Annually	See comment	See Appendix 3
HS10 Number of residents / service users involved in formal / informal consultation groups (including digital)	Quarterly	See comment	See Appendix 3
AH225 – Number of new build council houses currently started on site (year to date)	Quarterly	62	-

Affordable Homes Performance April to June 2022 / 2023

Appendix 1

Comments & Benchmarking where available

AH212 – £s Spend on B&B Monthly (cumulative)

Awaiting confirmation of targets – anticipated mid-August

Month	Target	Intervention
April		
May		
June		
July		
August		
September		
October		
November		
December		
January		
February		
March		

SH375 – Average SAP (EPC) rating of self-contained general needs dwellings Quarterly

EPC scores are divided into bands as follows:

- EPC rating A = 92 – 100 SAP points (most efficient)
- EPC rating B = 81 – 91 SAP points.
- EPC rating C = 69 – 80 SAP points.
- EPC rating D = 55 – 68 SAP points.
- EPC rating E = 39 – 54 SAP points.

Affordable Homes Performance April to June 2022 / 2023

- EPC rating F = 21 – 38 SAP points.
- EPC rating G = 1 – 20 SAP points (least efficient)

AH211 – Average days to re-let Housing stock – Monthly

Awaiting Commentary for Q1

Numbers of re-lets Housing stock Quarterly (Linked to PI above AH211)

Added due to feedback received from the Housing Performance Panel

AH204 – % satisfaction with responsive repairs – Quarterly

Month	Sent	Received	Response rate	Overall Satisfaction score 7 – 10
April	498	89	20%	91%
May	594	107	20%	92%
June	584	97	18%	96%

Appendix 2

Comments

Number of vacant but available to let Quarterly (linked to PI above SH363)

Added due to feedback received from the Housing Performance Panel

£ spent on rent loss from empty houses (cumulative) (Linked to PI above SH369)

Added due to feedback received from the Housing Performance Panel

SH376 – % tenants satisfied with the re-let service (year to date) Quarterly

Q1 – total of 6 completed surveys of which 6 were very or fairly satisfied

SH344 – % Customer satisfaction with the condition of new home (year to date) Quarterly

Q1 – total of 6 completed surveys of which 6 were good or satisfied

HS3 Number of parishes exploring the potential for delivering affordable housing on exception site

Q1 –

- Actively working with Parish / RP = Ten villages (Bassingbourn, Cottenham, Eltisley, Fen Drayton, Fowlmere, Haslingfield, Histon & Impington, Orwell Great Shelford, Stapleford)
- Undertaking Housing Needs Survey = Three villages (Bassingbourn, Cottenham and Histon & Impington, Haslingfield, Guilden Morden)
- At Pre-App Stage = 0
- Awaiting Planning Decision = 2 villages (Cottenham and Great Eversden)
- Received Planning Permission in Q4 = 2 villages (Fen Drayton & Newton)

Affordable Homes Performance April to June 2022 / 2023

Appendix 3

Comments

AH223 – Number of HRA properties that have been empty for over 4 months

Now reduced to a single figure of 6 which has not been the case since December 2019, last year was 33

HS2 Number of homes granted funding via Combined Authority

Q1 Note: Funding is no longer available through the Combined Authority Affordable Housing Programme and this PI will be deleted

HS4 Number of new affordable homes on rural exception sites given planning permission

Q1 – 22 (Cootes Lane, Fen Drayton – 14 no.) & (Land adjacent to 28 Harston Rd, Newton – 8 no.)

HS6 Percentage of planning consultations responded to within 21 days

Q1 – 86% (Three applications went over target 1 x 1 day, 1 x 1 x 6 days and 1 x 7days). Average time to respond = 18 days against a general target of 21 days.

HS7 Number of households supported to improve the energy efficiency of their home through Housing Repairs & Adaptation Grants (Cumulatively)

Boilers and heating:

2 completed

5 approved not completed

1 pipeline

Windows and doors:

0 completed

2 approved not completed

1 pipeline

Affordable Homes Performance April to June 2022 / 2023

HS8 – Number of tenant hours volunteered for tenancy engagement

Below are new ways we are measuring tenancy engagement:

Engagement via email & social media	Q1
Tenant email contact – successfully sent (out of approximately 7,500 tenants)	7,018
Online version of newsletter	'Viewed' = 727 'Deep read' = 194
Face book – total engagement (someone who has clicked read more, followed a link, shared, or reacted to a post)	618
Other engagement	Q1
Volunteer hours	72 hours 15 minutes
Meetings held	7
Estate visits completed	6

HS9 – Number of services changed, implemented, or withdrawn during the year as a result of resident involvement

Tenant volunteer's involvement on the following

- New Repairs contract
- Tenancy Policy
- Small Land Sales HRA Policy
- Estate Inspection Policy
- Tenant Satisfaction Survey

HS10 Number of residents / service users involved in formal / informal consultation groups (including digital)

We have been working with a group of tenants to make changes that will give tenants a voice in their housing service. Together we developed a new framework – a new way of working which replaced the existing Tenant Participation Group, Sheltered Housing and Leaseholder forums.

There are 6 tenants who are members of the Housing Performance Panel (HPP) and there are 6 tenants who are members of the Housing Engagement Board (HEB) who attend quarterly meetings and also volunteer on project groups. The same tenants do not all volunteer on the same group, but some may volunteer on more than one group.

5.3 SCDC – Review of Quarter 1 Complaints Data

Grace Andrews to report.

Affordable Homes Complaints Performance

Quarter 1 – April – June

2022 / 2023

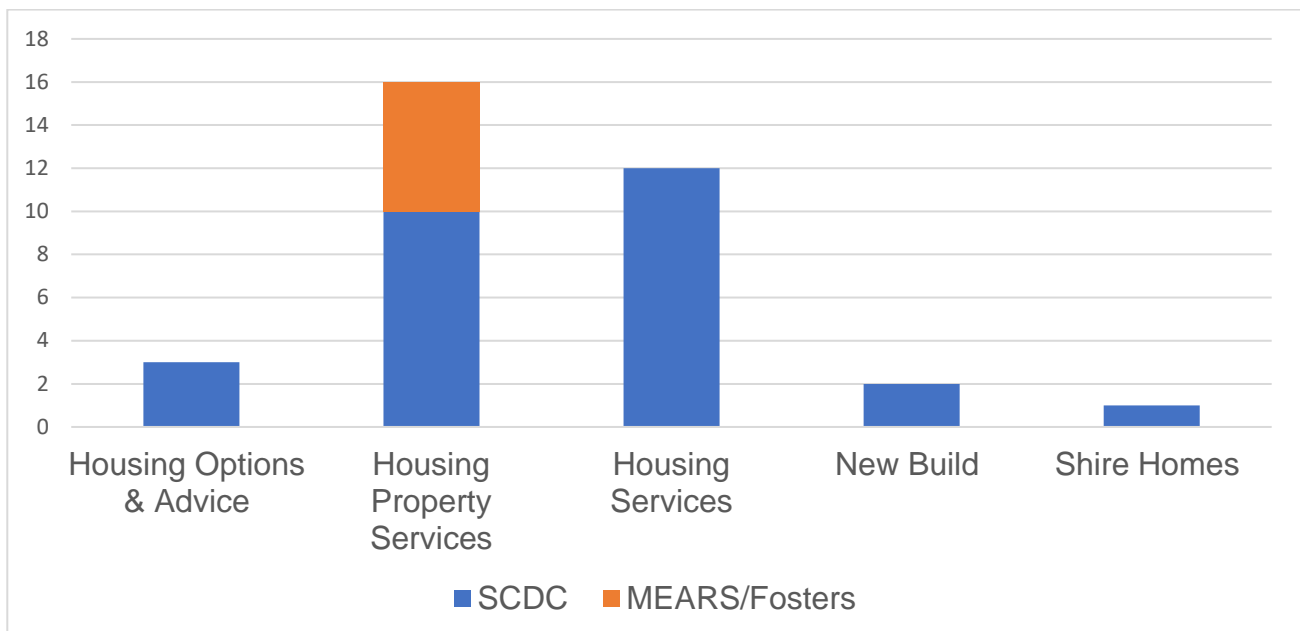
Looking back at previous years

Financial Year	Total Number of Stage 1 complaints	Total Number of Stage 2 complaints	Total Number of Stage 3 complaints	Total number of properties end of year General Needs and Housing for older people (GN & Hfop)	% of Stage 1 complaints to properties
2021 / 2022	145	16	3	5,345	2.7%
2020 / 2021	100	11	1	5,287	1.9%
2019 / 2020	61	8	4	5,246	1.2%
2018 / 2019	81	7	4	5,244	1.5%
2017 / 2018	77	3	2	5,237	1.5%
2016 / 2017	64	2	0	5,265	1.2%
2015 / 2016	79	3	0	5,251	1.5%
2014 / 2015	91	7	1	5,286	1.7%
2013 / 2014	89	5	0	5,308	1.7%

Volume of Complaints

Complaints received during quarter, broken down by stage	Quarter 1 April – June
Stage 1 = Expression of dissatisfaction that is not able to be resolved at first contact so requires investigation and response from Service Manager	30
Stage 2 = Unresolved at stage 1 so investigation required by Head of Service	4
Stage 3 = Housing Ombudsman	0
Total	34

Volume by Service Area



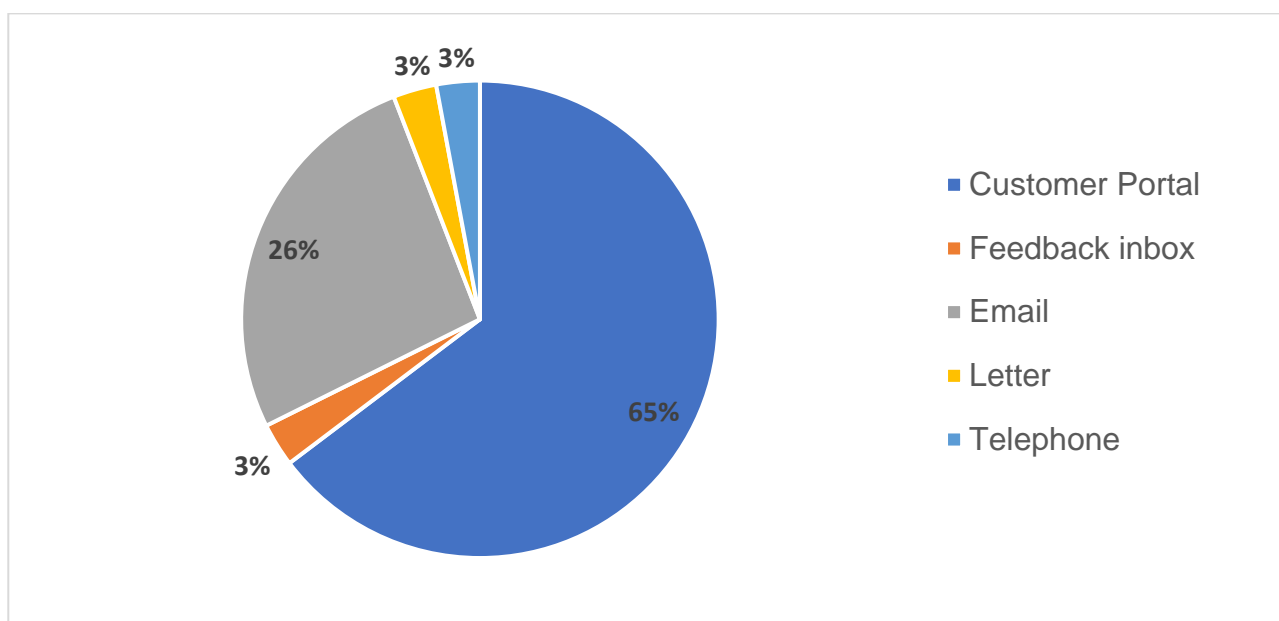
Complaints received falling within the SCDC Theme

Theme	Quarter 1 Total	%
Lack of communication	3	9%
Failure to act	11	32%
Service Delivery	2	6%
Not understanding processes	2	6%
Staff Conduct	7	21%
Misinformation	0	0
Charges	2	6%
Other	7	21%

Complaints received falling within the HouseMark Theme

Theme	Quarter 1 Total	%
Allocations	1	3%
ASB	2	6%
Estate Services	2	6%
Rent & Services	1	3%
Repair & Maintenance	15	44%
Staff & Customer Service	7	21%
Tenancy Management	3	9%
Other	3	9%

Method Complaints Received



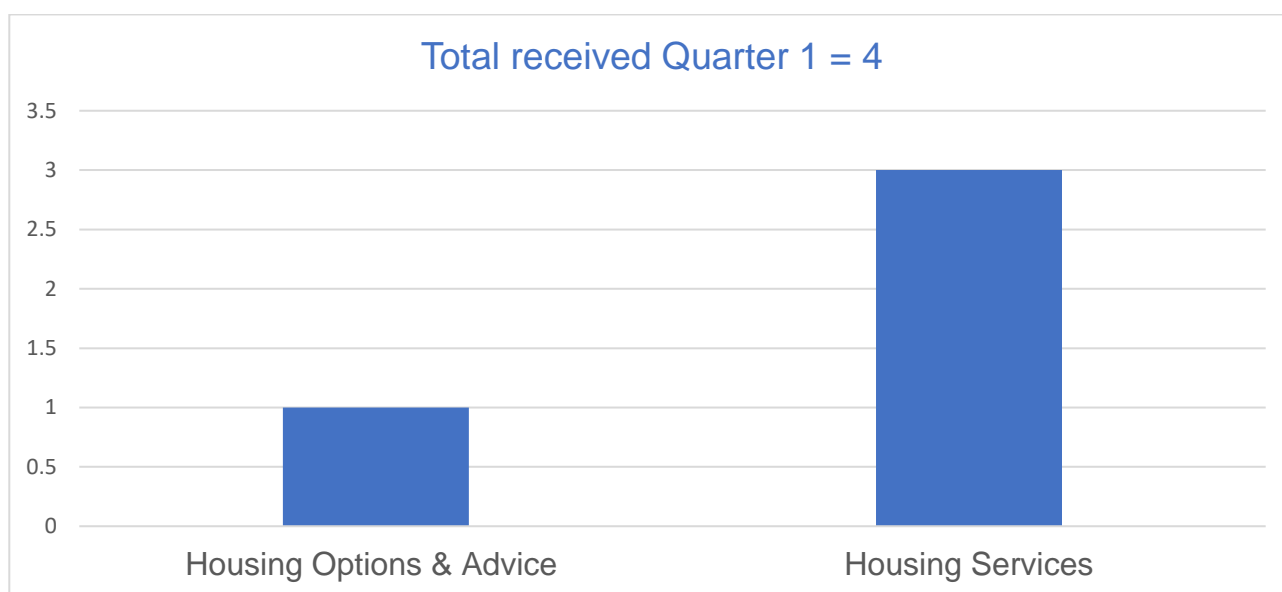
Complaints response times / targets

Response times / targets	Quarter 1
Number of complaint responses sent within quarter (Includes roll-over from previous quarters)	29
Number of complaint responses that were sent within target timescale (Includes stage 1 & stage2)	27
% of complaints responded within deadline (non – YTD includes stages 1 & 2) (SX121) (Target 80%)	93%
How many upheld = closed in favour of complainant	17
Not upheld = closed not in favour of complainant	11
Partly upheld = closed partly in favour of complainant	1

Caseload

Number of open complaints at end of the quarter	7
Number of open complaints that have exceeded target timescale at the end of the quarter	5 (I believe all are resolved, and it is just the action of sending a written official response)
Receipt date of oldest open complaint at end of quarter	3 May 2022
Number of days oldest complaint has been open for at end of quarter	40

Compliments by Service Area



Below are the four compliments received: –

- *“Often you can end up feeling treated as 'less than' in these processes but I have felt like you've really treated me as a person and that you have been kind and respectful. So thank you”*
- *“Just wanted to say Thank you for your help over the passed few months”*
- *“We want to say a very big thank you to you and the council for sorting this problem out”*
- *“I just wanted to take the time to give you some feedback from how you've dealt with ***** generally, but also with the sign-up process last week”*

5.4 Estate Inspections Report

A summary of the Estate Inspections held in May, June and July 2022 is included for noting.

Estate Inspection Summaries

May, June and July 2022

Ickleton and Duxford – 20 May 2022

- 13 issues raised, of which:
 - 1 is a street sign that was barely visible and a new sign has been ordered to replace it.
 - 5 are landscaping issues. Shrubs and tree maintenance is needed around some communal areas and this has been raised with SP Landscapes.
 - 4 issues have been raised with tenants for the following issues:
 - 2 are overgrown gardens
 - 1 is blocking the rear access pathway with items
 - 1 is rubbish being dumped in the garden
 - 1 is the issue of an abandoned car in the car park. Once ownership of the car is known, a letter will be sent to the owner.
 - 1 is the issue of rubble in a car park and a request has been submitted to remove it.
 - 1 issue of that cars are parking in gardens and using the path as a roadway. Other options are being investigated.

Milton – 26 May 2022

- 10 issues raised, of which:
 - 1 is a shed in the communal carpark which is being used by the tenant of flat number 4 only, which was agreed to previously due to mental health issues.
 - 2 issues have been reported to Mears, one being a communal door lock and the other is about a bench that needs removing or replacing.
 - 2 issues have been reported to SP Landscapes about overgrown weeds and shrubs, and fly-tipping.
 - 2 are letters to be sent to the tenants of 2 blocks of flats for the following issues:
 - The rear communal door is being propped open
 - Bicycles are being stored in the communal areas
 - 1 is about a TV that has been left outside the flat. A letter will be sent to the tenant to remove it.
 - 1 is the replacement and updating of fire safety signs in all the blocks of flats.
 - 1 is fly-tipping which will be reported and removed.

Coton – 21 June 2022

- 9 issues raised, of which:
 - 5 issues have been reported to SP Landscapes about an overgrown ditch, shrubs that need to be cut back, weeds that need to be sprayed and large trees in the play area that need to be removed.
 - 3 are letters to be sent to tenants for the following issues:
 - A boundary hedge that needs cutting back
 - A sofa that has been left in the garden
 - No dropped curb and large bushes need cutting back
 - 1 is a potential rough cut area for the Doubling Nature project which has been raised with Geoff Clark.

Swavesey – 30 June 2022

- 7 issues raised, of which:
 - 2 issues of fly-tipping have been reported to Waste to remove.
 - 1 issue is an unkempt garden and a letter has been sent to the tenant.
 - 1 issue is a raised concrete area in an alley way that has been reported to Housing Property Services to investigate.
 - 2 are shrubbery and rough cut issues in the Communal area which have been reported to the Sheltered Estate Officer.
 - 1 is a drain outside a property which is a trip hazard and has been reported to Operations.

Balsham – 21 July 2022

- 12 issues raised, of which:
 - 6 issues have been reported to SP Landscapes about hedges that need cutting back, an overgrown pathway, an overgrown ditch, trees that are covering lamp posts and some trees need accessing.
 - 2 issues raised with Operations, are:
 - A cracked ramp in the pathway behind a property
 - A fence that needs to be repaired
 - 2 are overgrown gardens which will be monitored and letters will be sent to the tenants if not tidied within 2 weeks.
 - 1 is a car parked on the grass. A letter will be sent to the tenant.
 - 1 is rubbish / fly-tipping between 2 properties. Letters have been sent to both tenants.

Ratings

The ratings are as follows:

Date of inspection	Village	Street / Area	Litter	Weeds	Regular grass cutting	Roughly cut grass	Communal area shrubs	Tenant's gardens
20 May	Ickleton	Icknield Close	4	3	2	3	N / A	3
	Duxford	Laceys Way	4	3	3	3	1	3
26 May	Milton	Walkling Way	3	2	4	2	1	N / A
21 June	Coton	Silverdale Avenue	4	2	4	4	2	4
30 June	Swavesey	Whitton Close	2	4	4	N / A	3	1
		Thistle Green	4	2	4	N / A	1	3
21 July	Balsham	Bartons Close	4	2	3	1	N / A	2

5.5 Update on the Repairs Contract

An update on the Repairs Contract, including the communication letters sent to residents, members and staff, and a press release, are included for noting.



Repairs Contract Update – 19 August 2022

Since the last update the mobilisation of the contract has started. I am including communications which have been sent to Residents, Members and staff giving differing levels of detail regarding the contract for your information.

Things are gathering pace both on the back-office functions and the customer-facing activities currently in practice. There have been some delays on the IT side but that will not impact on the service delivery of the new contract from the Go Live date of 3rd October 2022.

We have agreed on an additional platform for reporting repairs in addition to the existing call centre, emails, etcetera. This is in the form of an online site that can be accessed by any connected device at any time of the day. Once you have chosen the address the system guides you through a diagnostic screen to identify the repair in a clear and intuitive way. This then leads you to a LIVE appointment booking area where you can choose the date and timeslot (am or pm) and provide any special details and photos. So, making it much easier and more convenient if residents should choose to use this method of booking, eventually, this will be integrated seamlessly within the My South Cambs portal. I feel this will be a huge change and improve e-service greatly.

Linked to this on the day of repair, is a live tracking system which also can be accessed on any connected device. A text message will be received with a link. From this link you can see the appointment details, who the operative is, including a picture and most importantly where they are, also giving the opportunity to message the operative if you need to pop out for 5 minutes, etcetera. This will allow the resident much more flexibility during an appointment slot and avoid missed visits.

A fundamental part of the new contract is involvement from residents. We currently have a few working on the mobilisation team, concentrating on communications and customer-facing activities like the complaints process, operative training and general resident contact behaviours.

I will soon be activating the Performance and Scrutiny Residents Team and they will initially be involved with the re-invention training provided by Mears and will help to formalise the performance criteria, in addition to standard benchmarking and business KPI's to help the operational performance of the contract.

The new branding for the contract has been agreed, as you can see from the header. It is fresh, clear and modern reflecting the new working partnership.

This will be adopted on all communications, vans and contract-specific uniforms.

I am happy with the progress so far and do not currently anticipate any issues with going live on 3rd October 2022.

Happy to answer any questions, if you would like to email me before the meeting, I will be happy to gather the responses for the meeting.

Eddie Spicer

Service Manager – Housing Assets

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Name
Add
Add
Add
Pc

Contact: Eddie Spicer
Dial: 01954 713 000
Email: operations@scambs.gov.uk

17th August 2022

Dear Name

Launching your new and improved repairs and maintenance service

We know the repairs and maintenance service is one of the most important you receive from the Council and that we need to make sure we have arrangements in place that work for you and which you can rely on. That's why we're taking the opportunity of a brand new contract to reinvent how we go about planning and delivering this crucial service. The new contract arrangements will look and feel very different from the current service and are designed to focus on providing a great customer experience.

Following a rigorous selection process, supported throughout by the resident involvement panel members, Mears has successfully been awarded the new contract, winning against some tough competition due to the strength of their bid.

We'll be launching the new repairs service on **3 October**, which ties in with the start of the new partnership contract with Mears.

Our new partnership with Mears will be called "*working together to care for your home*" and will improve how the Council goes about planning, organising, and delivering the repairs service and programmes of investment work so we can improve the quality of homes.

Our new vision for a reinvented service

We will be working with Mears to deliver a reinvented service that matches the best practices of the leading social housing landlords. It will be centred around providing excellent customer service, as well as delivering the Council's wider business and social objectives around value for money, meeting the needs of residents and tackling the climate emergency.

On a day-to-day basis, you will benefit from new reporting and changes to how we check on the progress of repairs. These will introduce and embrace new technology to improve our service to you, including automated text confirmations and updates, as well as access to a live tracking system. This new service will be supported by Mears through the introduction of new IT systems and additional resources. We will

also retain some existing arrangements to ensure easy access for all, such as a telephone call centre and contact to Housing Officers and Property Services Officers.

In addition to the immediate customer service benefits, Mears has committed to helping the Council invest well in its housing properties, so all homes meet the future needs and expectations of tenants. Top of the list will be investing in energy efficiency measures that help protect the planet by reducing carbon emissions as well as minimising the amount of energy needed to heat your home. All this will help the Council meet its stretching targets for carbon reduction.

Mears will also bring wider benefits to the community including supporting local employment with apprenticeships and work experience programmes, schools' careers workshops and free training, as well as tackling social isolation through access to recycled IT equipment and a handyperson service for sheltered schemes.

We hope you will like the new look service and will write to you again with more details.

Should you wish to get involved with the resident involvement groups please contact **Resident.Involvement@scambs.gov.uk**

Regards.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Eddie Spicer', with a long horizontal line extending from the end of the signature.

Eddie Spicer, Service Manager – Housing Assets



Dear Members,

16th August 2022

Reinventing our repairs service

As you will be aware, Cabinet recently signed a new contract with Mears Group for our repairs and maintenance contract with plans for a renewed and extended service, for the district's 5,200 council homes.

The contract, which begins from October, will see Mears carry out all responsive repairs work across the district's social housing properties, providing quick and effective repairs, including boiler servicing.

As a significant contract for the Council, we were clear during the tender process that the successful provider would support our vision of reinventing our repair service for the future. Our Resident involvement panel has helped us define this and taken part in the process from the start.

We wanted to share some of the benefits we have secured in negotiating the current contract which underlines many of the Council's key priorities:

Key Changes:

A better customer journey:

We will be working with tenants and residents as we transition to the new service to ensure that we action any feedback provided by our STAR surveys to ensure we can build a service which is responsive to complaints etc. We have been clear with Mears that the contract will be managed very closely based on this feedback and the contract is contingent on excellent performance.

A 'Right First Time' Service:

When residents report a repair, call handlers will be trained to understand the issue there and then. By understanding the problem before we get to a property, we can ensure that we send the right person, with the right skills and tools, to complete the job the first time we visit.

Booking to suit residents:

We understand that many of our residents will be concerned about new technology for booking repairs so we will maintain current ways to contact the service and extend hours when they can phone.

We will also be able to offer greater flexibility to residents when it comes to booking an appointment. Repairs will now take place between 8am and 8pm Monday to Friday, and 8am to 1pm on Saturdays. We hope this will enable residents to schedule repairs around working hours, school runs and other commitments.

Contacting us online:

For those who feel comfortable doing so, residents will now be able to book online so they can manage repairs with the ability to reschedule and view appointments. This will include a two-way messaging system allowing residents and operatives to speak directly about

property access (for example, if they need to leave unexpectedly shortly before an operative is due).

Residents waiting for a repair can, if they wish, be kept updated by automated text and have access to a live tracking system, giving details on their repair, as well as a picture of the operator who will be visiting, adding an extra level of security for vulnerable tenants. The system automatically sends a link to a customer survey following a visit, meaning we can act if residents have not experienced a good service.

Further benefits:

Once the new contract starts, we will be working with Mears to progressively bring in new opportunities for residents. These include:

Reducing Fuel Poverty and Net Zero: The Council has set an ambition to make all our properties Net Zero by 2050 and the length of the new contract reflects us choosing a partner who will help us deliver to this timescale. Mears has successfully aided three local authorities to access funding from the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund and will be providing us with the support to access further funding streams as they become available. This includes supporting assessment of our stock and helping prepare us for 'shovel ready' projects and facilitation of funding applications.

Alongside longer-term funding support, we also requested that Mears provides support to our residents to educate them on how to reduce energy bills:

- Through their 'Keep Warm Keep Well' toolkit, Mears will run a series of local awareness and support programmes on better energy management in residents' homes, reducing the effects of fuel poverty.
- Mears will hold a Big Energy Saving Week each autumn to create a focus on energy usage and efficiency awareness. Operatives will also signpost customers to energy savings ideas and tips.
- They will develop a road map to look at neutrality in delivering the repairs service
- Mears will support the Council in mapping our properties through surveying and identification, to help us understand where measures are needed for compliance with new legislation

Tackling Inequalities: Mears employs a tool which can map out our local areas based on demographic data, such as unemployment, age, crime and social deprivation. They will share the reporting data which will enable us to deliver social value initiatives that align to localised needs.

Mears employs a Housing Enforcement Officer - Paula Rae – who supports SCDC customers to maintain their tenancies and prevent homelessness. Paula works with residents facing eviction and contacts them to:

- Check they are claiming all the right benefits
- Provide support at court appearances
- Negotiate affordable repayment deals with creditors
- Liaise with other agencies on behalf of resident
- Offer ongoing support.

Local Employment and skills: 95% of the Mears team live in SCDC postcodes meaning that the contract will meaningfully support local employment. The new contract will see the workforce rise from 40 to 57 initially.

Apprenticeships: Mears will create a minimum of five apprenticeships during the contract term. Local candidates will be sourced from the National Apprenticeship Programme and our pre-recruitment/work experience programme for hard-to-reach groups. 90% of apprentices go on to be fully employed by Mears or a supplier.

Training linked to employment outcomes: Mears Pre-Recruitment & Trade Taster Programmes have been developed to actively target priority groups such as NEETs, long-term unemployed, single parents, all ethnic groups, those in care/care leavers and ex-military personnel, to help with the transition into employment and apprenticeships.

Engaging with Schools and Colleges: Mears has committed to two school /college engagement workshops per year, offering 1:1 mentoring, careers advice, introduction to work, CV writing, mock interview practice workshops etc.

Tradeswomen into Maintenance: The Mears Tradeswomen into Maintenance Project has produced resources that help encourage girls to think about non-traditional careers. We will work with Mears to use these resources to engage with primary school girls, highlighting the different career choices available to them at a very young age.

Skills Improvement: Mears Pathways will provide career, skills and employment opportunities to our residents free of charge. Courses cover subjects including Wellbeing, Health Awareness, Dementia Awareness, Mental Health, Diversity & Inclusion and Employability.

Customer Training: Mears will offer a minimum of two days trades training sessions for residents, covering:

- DIY: teaching customers skills such as painting & decorating, basic plumbing & tiling
- Energy efficiency: focussing on customers at risk from fuel poverty
- Damp & mould management.

Supplier Support: Mears will support local suppliers with the qualification process and any required accreditations. Subcontractor staff undertake the same training regime as their directly employed colleagues supporting them to get additional qualifications. MearsPayables is an electronic payment system providing payment within 10-working days of invoice authorisation, up to three times per month – helping suppliers improve cash flow.

Handyperson service: Mears handyman service has proved a popular service which aims to reduce the need for call outs by regularly addressing minor repairs. They will use sheltered schemes (such as Elm Court) and community centres to host tea/coffee mornings to engage with residents and advertise our handyperson service. Mears will also conduct cyclical visits to sheltered scheme properties ensuring regular visits to carry out minor repairs and preventative maintenance. Through dedicating this consistent resource, the Mears handyperson will be able to establish relationships with vulnerable customers.

Digital Inclusion: We recognise that limited access to technology and Wi-Fi creates deeper social isolation. Mears will hold a monthly digital workshop at a different sheltered scheme, supporting residents to engage and use online platforms and facilities. We recognise that many customers will not have access to IT equipment and will, in partnership with Mears, offer an IT equipment recycling scheme.

Community Centre Libraries: We propose to establish / enhance libraries within each community centre with books donated through a Mears and supply chain partners book recycling appeal. We can also apply for a grant to the Mears Foundation to buy a stock of

books. We will rotate the stock of books at each community centre every month to ensure new books are constantly available.

These are just some of the benefits we will see with the new contract. If members require any further information on any of the points in this briefing, please contact eddie.spicer@scambs.gov.uk or you can email Mears directly on elaine.phillips@mearsgroup.co.uk



Eddie Spicer
Service Manager – Housing Assets



Peter Baldwin
Managing Director - Mears



12th August 2022

Dear South Cambs Team,

We wanted to reach out to you all to tell you that Mears have been awarded a new contract with South Cambs District Council. So first, a big thank you to all those who have contributed to the process and worked hard to maintain the service during the transition period.

The Council has appointed Mears as its repairs and maintenance contractor with plans for a renewed and extended service, for the district's 5,200 council homes.

The contract, which begins in October, will see Mears carry out all responsive repair work across the district's social housing properties, providing quick and effective repairs, including boiler servicing for council tenants.. With over 95% of staff living locally, this is a win for all of us as we'll also get to deliver for our own communities.

This significant contract also coincides with the council's plans to make every social housing unit Net Zero by 2050. This means that our team has a good pipeline of work ahead of us, which not only provides extra job security but will also allow many of you to develop new lifelong skills for the green agenda in conjunction with Mears.

A better customer journey

We will be working with residents as we transition to the new service to ensure that we action any feedback provided by the recent STAR surveys to ensure we can build a service which is responsive to complaints. Mears will be managed very closely based on this feedback and the contract is contingent on an excellent performance.

A 'Right First Time' Service

When residents report a repair, call handlers will be trained to understand the issue there and then. By understanding the problem before we get to a property, we can ensure that we send the right person, with the right skills and tools, to complete the job the first time we visit.

Booking to suit residents

The service will offer greater flexibility for booking an appointment both online and by phone, with repairs taking place 8am-8pm Monday to Friday, and 8am-1pm on Saturdays, enabling residents to schedule repairs around working hours, school runs and other commitments. This is a moment to pause and reflect upon how we can truly reinvent the service as we support the Council's vision for repairs which are responsive to tenant feedback and improved service delivery. As it stands, the Council's own resident feedback shows dissatisfaction with the service so we must



take this opportunity to pause and think through how we can be a model for service excellence for the whole of the UK.

The new contract offers a better tenant service with more options for weekend and evening callouts and more options to book. So, we need to be clear that this is a new contract which will look and feel very different as of 3 October to how we have worked in the past.

Mears will be having retraining and awareness workshops to highlight and improve the customer experience in the run up to going live, we at SCDC should also be looking at any improvements we can make to the way we collectively deliver and manage the service to enable Mears to deliver to the residents the best possible service.

We are looking to deliver excellence from a one team approach and the experience received by the resident should be one of a seamless nature whether they are interacting with Mears or SCDC directly, a REAL partnership.

The feel of the contract will be different too, a new contract image and branding will be launched along with new technologies alongside new working methods.

I am excited for the future as I am sure you will be, as always change can be a concern even if it is designed to be an improvement, should you in any way feel concerned or just want to have a chat about things in confidence please contact either your line manager, Alex, Wayne or myself we will be able to reassure you or inform you of developments or concerns you have.

Thank you for your hard work and dedication every day, you all do an amazing job.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Eddie Spicer', with a long horizontal line extending from the end of the signature.

Eddie Spicer
Service Manager – Housing Assets

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Peter Baldwin', with a long horizontal line extending from the end of the signature.

Peter Baldwin
Managing Director - Mears



Press Release

15th August 2022

South Cambridgeshire District Council reinvents repairs and maintenance service

South Cambridgeshire District Council has appointed Mears as its repairs and maintenance contractor with plans for a renewed and extended service, for the district's 5,200 council homes.

The contract, which begins from October, will see Mears carry out all responsive repairs work across the district's social housing properties, providing quick and effective repairs, including boiler servicing for council tenants.

The contract is designed to significantly contribute to the target of decarbonising it's housing stock by 2050, with Mears providing support for applications to decarbonisation funding.

The all-new repairs contract with Mears will provide an improved service which uses modern technology to offer convenient appointments with extended, more flexible hours. Repairs will now take place between 8am and 8pm Monday to Friday, and 8am to 1pm on Saturdays.

Customers waiting for a repair can, if they wish, be kept updated by automated text and have access to a live tracking system, giving details on their repair, as well as a picture of the operator who will be visiting, adding an extra level of security for vulnerable tenants.

The software also provides the resident with an immediate satisfaction survey, letting the council and Mears know how they feel about the service they have received.

Aside from the immediate customer service benefits, Mears has committed to helping reduce fuel poverty and supporting the council to deliver Net Zero by 2050 by improving existing housing stock as well as preparing for future projects.

The organisation will also support local employment and apprenticeships with work experience programmes, schools' careers workshops and free training, as well as tackling social isolation through offering access to recycled IT equipment and a handyman service for sheltered schemes.



Councillor John Batchelor, South Cambridgeshire District Council’s Lead Cabinet Member for Housing, said: “This is a significant contract for the Council and during the tender process we were clear that the successful provider would have a focus on helping us to meet our ambitions to deliver greener, more energy efficient homes and to help those in our communities who are most in need.

This partnership forms part of our commitment to providing a safe and efficient service for our tenants, which goes much further than just repairs, while also ensuring we get the best value for our money.”

Peter Baldwin, Managing Director at Mears, added; “We’re pleased to have been appointed to serve social housing tenants in South Cambridgeshire and are committed to delivering an outstanding repairs service which is fit for the future.

Mears’ aim is to always be a safe pair of hands for residents and will bring a wealth of experience in repairs contract delivery. We recognise the value of our partnership with South Cambridgeshire Council will bring and are looking forward to supporting its vision to reinvent its repairs service for the future.”

5.6 Update on Tenant Satisfaction Survey Project (STAR)

The Tenant Satisfaction Survey results have been published on our website and presentations on the results by M.E.L Research were given to officers and tenant volunteers at the end of July 2022. An Improvement Plan is now being developed.

For noting.

6. New Matters

6.1 Tpas National Tenant Conference – Feedback Reports

The Tpas National Tenant Conference held at the beginning of July 2022 was attended by Paul Bowman, Margaret Wilson (HEB) and Jim Watson (HEB).

Feedback reports from the tenant volunteers, which will be discussed at the next HEB meeting, are included in the pack for noting.

Should any HPP members wish to attend the HEB meeting on 20 September 2022 as an observer, please contact Bronwen Taylor.

For noting.

A Short Report on

tpas

National Tenant Conference 6th & 7th July 2022

Voco St John's, Solihull

With six workshops to choose from, twice a day for each day, we each attended different sessions in order to cover the wide range of subject matter relating to Tenants of both Local Authorities and Housing Associations. We did not all attend our first choices due to COVID affecting some speakers.

Note: Mears was one of the Conference Sponsors, so we might assume that they could or should be aware of much of what was being discussed and explored. (Alison Wilkinson, Lead Customer Success Manager from Mears was also present and was receptive to our input)

Both the Opening and Keynote Speakers referred to the upcoming challenges Social Housing Landlords face in the light of new Government Legislation brought about by (in particular) Grenfell:

- Measureable and meaningful improvement needed in performance levels, service standards and attitudes towards Tenants
- Requires a change of culture
- Data collection to be robust
- KPI's to be relevant
- Need to act *ahead* of the White Paper
- Consumer Regulation Review (August) underlines the above
- Communication with Tenants is vital. Multiple platforms required
- Accurate self-assessment and the will to act on the findings is imperative

Note: In retrospect, the latest SCDC Tenant and Leaseholder Survey confirm these challenges – in particular the need for a change of culture to reduce stigma, effective communication and management of service expectations.

The Housing Ombudsman, Richard Blakeway, in particular called for landlords to focus on:

- Strong Data Collection
- Being Pro-active, not reactive

- When communicating, look for silences!
- Remember that a failure in service can lead to a failure of Governance
- Complaints handlers are NOT ‘defenders of the organisation’

Note: All of the above are relevant to both the Performance Management of Mears and the recent Tenant and Leaseholder Satisfaction Survey.

Session A

Scrutiny – Gathering the Evidence

Useful reading: Evidence for Accountability (The Nuffield Foundation)

Wilful Blindness (Margaret Heffernan)

“You are responsible if you could have known, and should have known, something which instead you strove not to see”

A thought provoking session underlining the need for accurate and meaningful data collection.

Only good quality evidence gathering will produce good quality research and respected conclusions. It can and does:

- Help to identify good practice – as well as bad
- Add credibility to specific concerns
- Help shape recommendations

But:

- Evidence informs, it does not rule
- It may be weak or conflicting, so it needs quality assessment
- Evidence from different perspectives should always be sought.

So:

- Embed the User Perspective
- Get others involved
- Use both Qualitative (interviews) and Quantitative (Paper and Online tick box) techniques
- Chatham House Rules for Focus Groups
- Advertise Successes!

Note 1: Bullet point 6 is relevant to the somewhat skewed input from the older SCDC tenants in the recent survey.

Note 2: The relevance of this session to past practices regarding management of the Mears contract is obvious. The need to apply better processes to allow accurate scrutiny of, for instance, Mears' performance in their new and improved offering is clear. For example, accurate data collection (on which Mears KPIs rely) must be monitored by the SCDC Call Centre if the quality of data produced (re: complaints) is to be respected.

Session B

Governance: The role and the models to deliver effective engagement

‘.....to develop the customer voice as part of governance’

Memorable quotes: ...“to ensure that tenants of social housing have the opportunity to be involved in its management and to hold their landlords to account” ...“Tenants should have opportunities to shape service delivery and to hold the responsible board to account”

This session acted as confirmation that SCDC has a structure and processes in place to effectively engage with Tenants.

Note: This is not the same as being fully engaged, as the latest satisfaction survey confirms - Councillors and Officers now recognise that this aspect requires attention.

Session C

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) in social housing - what more needs to be done?

An informative session that explored current issues. Asking what more should be done by Landlords and how Tenants themselves have a role to play influencing this agenda.

Memorable quote: "If I'm having problems at work, I can get another job. If it's on the street, I can take an alternative route home. But it's a bigger issue if it's happening at my home because it's where I'm supposed to feel safe..."

Food for thought:

- English Housing Survey 2019-20 found 18% of all ethnic minority households in social housing were living in overcrowded homes (7% for white households).

- 11% of statutory homelessness applications come from Black people.
- Over the 20 years pre-pandemic, fuel poverty rates in England rose 22% for non-white households (fell 19% for white households).
- Almost half of social housing tenants are assessed as living in poverty.
- 58% of social housing tenant households are headed by a woman (37% O/O, 42% PRS).
- Half of social housing tenants have a household member with a disability or LLTI (29% O/O, 23% PRS).
- Greater proportion of social housing tenants are carers than in the general population

Social housing by its very nature should be designed with rebalancing inequalities in mind – the principles of EDI should really be embedded in the core of what our organisations do. Housing people from the protected characteristic groups and others with vulnerabilities or experience systemic disadvantage is a big element of the social purpose of social housing organisations.

The regulator of social housing should ensure that landlords:

- Provide choices, information and communication that is appropriate to the diverse needs of their tenants in the delivery of all standards
- Treat all tenants with fairness and respect.
- Demonstrate that they understand the different needs of their tenants, including in relation to the equality strands and tenants with additional support needs.
- Demonstrate how they respond to tenants' needs in the way they provide services and communicate with tenants.

In conclusion:

Organisations need to prioritise listening to the voices of all their tenants and ensure they are removing as many barriers as possible to tenant engagement and involvement.

Ensure 'diverse' voices are not only heard but listened to and involved in co-creation and decision-making where appropriate.

Resolve discriminatory recruitment practices, including those that use only traditional interview techniques that may disadvantage neuro-diverse candidates, for instance.

Achieve meaningful representation across all levels of the organisation.

Note: As this unit was presented by the Housing Diversity Network, they focused on both the needs of the Tenants and the structure of the housing organisation.

Session D

Learning from Complaints

Memorable quote: 'Your most unhappy customers are your greatest source of learning'

As this session was presented by the Housing Ombudsman Service, the Complaint Handling Code (which was published in 2020 following on from the lessons learned from Grenfell) was discussed in some depth.

Revised Code from April 2022:

- Review based on FAQs, sector engagement, casework, landlord and **tenant surveys**

'An effective complaints process enables a landlord to learn from the issues that arise for residents and to take steps to improve the services it provides' Intro to Complaint Handling Code

Note: With the new Mears Contract about to go live shortly, much discussion about the complaints handling process is ongoing.

Importance of learning from complaints

Compliance with the Regulator:

- ▶ 'Tenant Involvement & Empowerment Standard'
 - ▶ Use complaints to improve services and publish information annually

Compliance with the Housing Ombudsman:

- ▶ Complaint Handling Code requirements:
 - ▶ Promotes: 'Continuous learning and improvement' (Section 7)
 - ▶ Promotes a positive complaints and learning culture
 - ▶ Landlords should seek feedback from residents to drive learning
 - ▶ Governing body should receive feedback and insights from complaints
 - ▶ Report on learning and improvements in annual report to tenants and elsewhere
- ▶ Learning - to prevent repeat findings of maladministration!

Housing
Ombudsman Service

Memorable Quote: 'A wise man can learn more from a foolish question than a fool can learn from a wise answer'

Tpas National Tenant Conference – July 2022

Feedback Report – Margaret Wilson

Day 1, Opening Speaker – Tpas CEO

As a person new to Tpas and national tenancy matters it struck me that Tpas's expertise was largely based on experience with Housing Associations. I may be wrong but reference was frequently made to 'the board' and similar non-Local Government (LA) acronyms. Whilst this should not be problematic it did strike me that Las can be seen as rather different organisations overall. For example, Las have to deal with elections, changing political ideology, planning and legal matters as well as housing and all that that entails. Nevertheless, being social landlords remains a common theme and the type of organisation should not make a difference to tenants.

Points taken from Tpas goals:

- ⇒ Landlords need to know their tenants (example, Vulnerable people) as ignorance often leads to material deterioration of property
- ⇒ Provides a national voice for tenants but not as a pressure group
- ⇒ 'consumer issues' are the main priority- defined as making a meaningful difference for tenants or that changes must be possible for all landlords
- ⇒ Tenant satisfaction (example, Surveys leading to KPIs)
- ⇒ Improving consumer standards (using revised and extended consultation)
- ⇒ Change of culture (top down changes, repairs, ASBOs, new-build)
- ⇒ Improve communication
- ⇒ Ageing stock (refurbish vs retrofit vs rebuild)

Day 1, Session 1 – Learning from Grenfell

- ⇒ Aesthetics / need (of tenants) vs budget
- ⇒ Aluminium cladding
- ⇒ Make sure involved tenants are sceptical about products and construction methods
- ⇒ Contractors vs Landlords – v. difficult to get anyone to take on job / responsibility (MEMOLI Report)
- ⇒ Multiple occupation – Personal Evacuation Plans. Fire risk assessor must be independent

Day 1, Session 2 – Stop Social Housing Stigma

This is mainly a new(ish) tenant-led enterprise

- ⇒ Raising awareness that Social Housing tenants are ordinary, hard-working people who love their homes
- ⇒ Social housing is for *homes*; they are not units / assets
- ⇒ Promotion of home ownership is very unhelpful in improving societal attitudes and culture
- ⇒ What should the people that occupy these homes be called? that is, Tenants / residents / customers
- ⇒ Working with developers/landlords to stop / prevent the obvious differences between private and social housing within new developments
- ⇒ Improve the response to and involvement of engaged tenants

Day 2, Keynote Speaker – Housing Ombudsman

- ⇒ Opening video – "things haven't changed for 40years"
- ⇒ Landlords should drive contractors
- ⇒ Not just about complaints and complaint systems
- ⇒ Ombudsman's powers:
 - ❖ **Order** this is statutory ~ can be used in court proceedings
 - ❖ **Recommendation** this is not enforceable
- ⇒ There are multiple routes into the complaints system

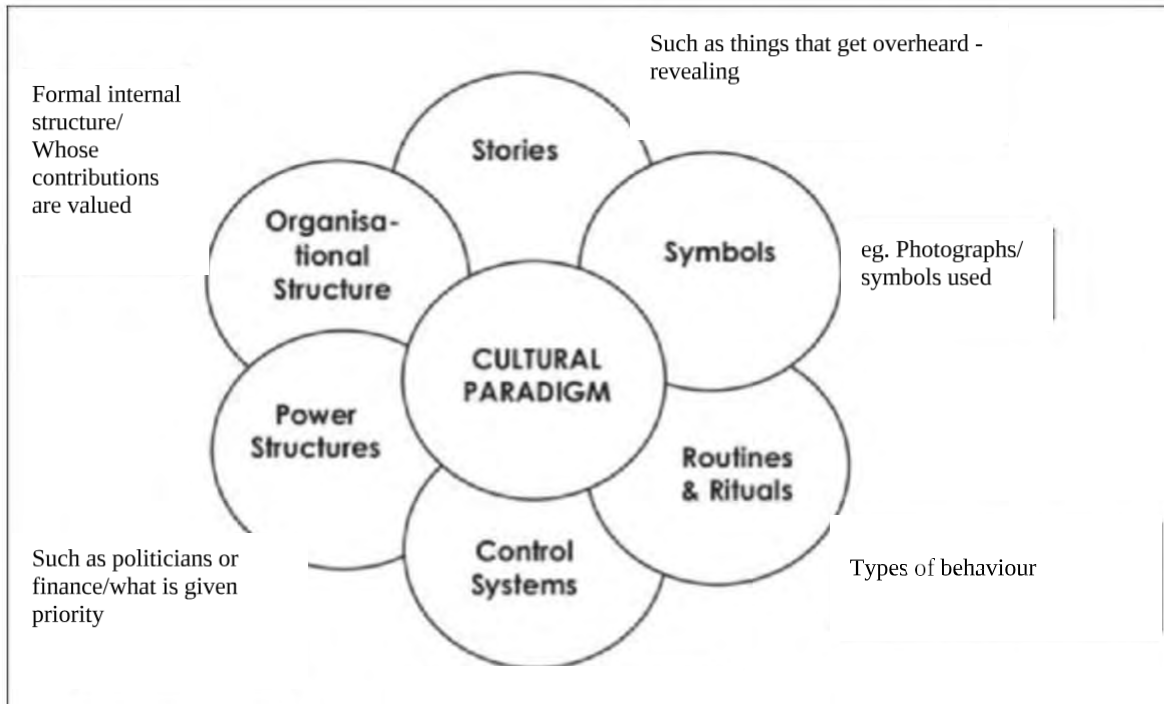
Day 2, Session 3 – Community Resilience

- ⇒ Introducing new model for social housing (Liverpool Project)
- ⇒ Community Land Trusts
- ⇒ Tenants investing in jointly owned land for building/renovation
- ⇒ Potentially working with developers
- ⇒ Works in rural areas
- ⇒ All property is for rent
- ⇒ Changing ideology and attitudes
- ⇒ Make Wi-Fi available in all Council estates – councils trying to get people to use internet



Day 2, Session 4 – Making tenants' voices heard

- ⇒ Session run by Tpas
- ⇒ Resident involvement culture
- ⇒ Culture central to all activities; succeed / fail
- ⇒ Cultural Web (Scholes & Johnson, 1992)



How does the web apply to SCDC resident engagement?

- ⇒ Ensure HEB (or other involved tenants) are involved in induction of new employees
- ⇒ No tenant voice = no approval
- ⇒ Staff and leaders meet tenants
- ⇒ Include tenants in all staff appraisals
- ⇒ Recruitment – involved tenant included in job interviews
 - two way feedback
- ⇒ Don't pass the buck – how to get things done:
 - ❖ Initial approach ~ go to department
 - ❖ No result ~ go to councillor
 - ❖ Not satisfied~ go to **M.P.**

MY REPORT

I think Tpas is largely used to dealing with Housing Associations; I may be wrong but I think the recent White Paper is what has incorporated all Social Housing landlords into one paradigm. Prior to that Local Authorities and Housing Associations seem to have been separately regulated.

Basically, my overall take-away from this conference is that there is a growing sense that enough is enough. Tenants in Social Housing (itself a terminology that many don't like) are ordinary people without a voice or power. The Grenfell Tower Inquiry has exposed the culture of treating anybody who 'rocks the boat' as a trouble-maker. Tenants should be involved in the whole infrastructure of Social landlords' culture; from recruiting and training staff to being 'on the board'. ("on the board" or "at board level" were frequent expressions which is why I think Tpas was largely concerned with HSAs).

Developers and planners have responsibility from the outset (so LAs can have influence at a very early stage) for what, how, and where they build. Too many SH estates are tucked away 'out of sight' and materials used in construction are obviously different from other housing. (For me an example is Cambourne).

I think the conference exposed the fact that too many decisions are made by people with absolutely no experience of the effect that their lack of / action will have upon people's lives. This, of course, stems from the highest, government, level. Little or no attention is given to unintended consequences – such as ghettos.

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Feedback Report – Jim Watson

Day 1

The talk that Jenny Osbourne, Chief Executive – Tpas, was interesting and she did say it was mostly about social housing not district council there is a difference I believe from housing associations and the way things are done.

Keynote Speaker was Kate Dodsworth, Director of Consumer Regulation – Regulator of Social Housing (RSH), who also gave a good speech who talked about the update of the white paper will require social housing landlords to understand culture change and co-operation and to engage tenants on building safety disrepair and more.

Well on arriving at the conference, 2 of my choices were changed because of covid of two speakers. Not a good start, but I still attended:

- A5 – How can we be sure our voice is having any impact at all? – Emma Gilpin – Tpas

AND

- B1 – Building Safety: the sector's big agenda – Andy McGrory & Michael Hill – Building safety Regulator: Health & Safety Executive

on the first day although the theme did appear to be about Housing Associations mostly and not really about local councils like South Cambs District however I think there may have been something South Cambs could take from them.

Day 2

The second day was started off by Richard Blakeway, Housing Ombudsman Service , Keynote Speaker. He was appointed as Housing Ombudsman on 1st September 2019. He explained it's been a hectic few years for the housing ombudsman with increased visibility expectations and new guidance for the sector.

More needs to change in complaint handling in the sector ?

The second day I attended:

- C2 – Mergers – what's the best practice for resident involvement? – Dave Smethurst – Tpas,

as this I thought might be of more information as I sat on the shadow board when South Cambs were doing a resident run to change to a new housing, but that did not happen at that time but it was interesting maybe for the future ?

Most of the other delegates had already been through that and have grown in size was my feeling.

Also attended:

- D3 – Ready to Regulate? – Caritas Charles – Tpas

it's a new world of regulation is on its way.

The housing regulation is going to parliament now and is set to bring some of the biggest changes in the housing sector for years with the potential to really empower tenant voices.

On the whole it was well worth attending looking forward to next year's one now.

7. Any other Business (AOB)

Any additional issues to be raised.

8. Meeting Dates

- 1 December 2022
- 2 March 2023

9. Closing