Housing Engagement Board

Minutes of the Quarterly Meeting

held on Monday, 22 June 2026

from 2pm to 4pm

in the Monkfield Room, South Cambridgeshire Hall, Cambourne

Attendees:	Cllr John Batchelor – Chair
	Vivienne Till (Elected Tenant Representative) – Vice-Chair
	Amy Stock (Elected Tenant Representative)
	Margaret Wilson (Elected Tenant Representative)
	Jim Watson (Elected Tenant Representative)
	Patti Hall (Elected Residential Leaseholder Representative)
	Ivor Grant (Tenant Volunteer)
	Julie Fletcher (SCDC – Services Manager – Housing Strategy)
	Geoff Clark (SCDC – Services Manager – Tenancy and Estates)
	Eddie Spicer (SCDC – Service Manager – Housing Assets) (online)
	Gina Manderson (SCDC – Housing Communications Officer) – Minute taker
	Elizabeth Mccluskey (SCDC – New Build Intern)
Apologies:	Cllr Heather Williams
	Cllr Eileen Wilson
	Laura Nelson (Elected Tenant Representative) (no apology received)
	Michael Luffman (Elected Tenant Representative)
	Peter Campbell (SCDC – Head of Housing)
	Dave Armitage (SCDC – Resident Involvement Team Leader)
	Bronwen Taylor (SCDC – Resident Involvement Officer)

1. Welcome and Apologies

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting at 2pm.

Apologies were received from Cllr Heather Williams, Cllr Eileen Wilson, Michael Luffman, Peter Campbell, Dave Armitage and Bronwen Taylor.

2. Quorum

The meeting was quorate.

3. Minutes of Previous Meetings – 15 January 2026 and 26 March 2026

The Chair referred to the minutes of the meetings held on 15 January 2026 and 26 March 2026.

15 January 2026

Margaret Wilson referred to the heading "Reaching Every Tenant Policy", under point 4.1 – Endorsement of Policies, on page four of the minutes and said that the word "with" had been repeated in the second sentence and suggested that the second "with" be removed.

The minutes of the meetings held on 15 January 2026 and 26 March 2026 were approved by the Board as true reflections of the meetings, subject to the above minor amendment.

Action: Bronwen Taylor

3.1 Matters Arising from the meeting held on 15 January 2026

Item 3 – Minutes of previous Meetings – 25 September 2025 and 27 October 2025

Action: Amend the minutes as follows:

- **Minutes of 25 September 2025** – item 4.1 – Water Meter Project – paragraph four – the word "effect" should read "affect"
- **Minutes of 27 October 2025** – item 3 – Endorsement of Policies – paragraph two – the word "Councillor" be added before the word "Overview"

Report back: The minutes have been amended accordingly.

For noting.

Item 4.3 – Adaptations

Action: To provide a report on adaptations to see what the demand was and how the demands were being met.

Report back: Added to the agenda as item 4.1.

Item 5.1 – Forward Plan 2025 / 2026

Action: To discuss including a feedback report from the HEB to the Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Full Council in the constitution with Democratic Services.

Report back: Suggested that an annual report is taken through to the Scrutiny and Review Committee and Cabinet, possibly in October 2026, outlining the work that tenant representatives have been involved in.

For noting.

Item 5.3 – Policy and Procedure Panel

Action: To send a list of actions that require evidence of being completed.

Report back: Julie Fletcher advised that the actions on the list had been included in the appendices which were included in the agenda pack and amended where appropriate in the policies.

For noting.

Item 6.1 – Collection of Information from Tenants

Action: To investigate why both email and in-person collections of information from tenants happened simultaneously.

Report back: Added to the agenda as item 4.2.

Item 6.3 – Communal Hall Accounts

Actions: To set up a meeting with the accountant, tenant representatives and councillors to discuss the communal hall accounts.

Report back: Added to the agenda as item 4.3.

4. New Matters

4.1 Disabled Adaptations in Council Properties

Julie Fletcher referred to the report and gave an update on the Council's position with regards to disabled adaptations in council properties; and notes the performance information and proposed future monitoring measures. She said it had been provided in response to a request from the Housing Engagement Board for further information on how the Council managed disabled adaptations within the Housing Revenue Account (HRA).

Margaret Wilson asked a question about Point 12 – Approval is subject to policy criteria, budget availability and value-for-money considerations. She asked if there were any other budgets available for this work such as from the NHS or did it all have to be funded by SCDC?

Julie Fetcher advised that as part of the HRA Financial Settlement, SCDC would fund disabled adaptations for its council properties.

This report was noted.

4.2 Tenant Census Project

Julie Fletcher introduced the report explaining and providing an update on the Tenant Census project which commenced in December 2025, with the aim to collect tenant data on household composition, including details of any disabilities, language needs and preferred methods of contact. This initiative was an important step in meeting our responsibilities under the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 and the enhanced requirements set by the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH).

Jim Watson asked what the response rate had been so far.

Julie Fletcher referred him to point 6 in the report which stated that we had received 2,503 responses, representing a 45.4% overall response rate. This was broken down by 1,639 responses from tenants living in general needs housing (39%) and 864 responses from tenants in sheltered housing (65.8%). She said the aim was to get 95% response rate from Sheltered Housing tenants and an 85% response rate from general needs tenants.

Margaret Wilson asked if we would be recording those who had refused to provide their information so that if there were issues at some point we would have a record that the information was asked for but not provided.

Julie Fletcher advised that now we were getting to the stage of contacting people for a third or fourth time, a record would be made that the tenant had refused.

The report was noted.

4.3 Communal Room Service Charges

Geoff Clark explained that a meeting had been set up in March but due to low attendance a further meeting had been arranged within the next few weeks. He said the meeting was open to anyone who would like to come and discuss the issue. He added that Cllr Williams had expressed an interest in attending the meeting so he would pass on the details of the meeting to her.

Geoff Clark shared further information with Margaret Wilson, Patti Hall and Ivor Grant, and invited any questions that arose from that to be sent over before the next meeting for discussion.

Action: Geoff Clark

4.4 Endorsement of Policies

Pets Policy

Julie Fletcher advised that the Pet Policy had been reviewed and consulted on more widely through the website approximately a year ago, which generated a significant amount of feedback. The responses reflected a range of views, with some residents supporting the introduction of a policy on pet ownership and others opposed to it.

Geoff Clark added that feedback had also been received from colleagues in Housing, who highlighted areas where the wording appeared contradictory. As a result, amendments were made to improve clarity. He emphasised that the policy was not intended to prevent residents from keeping pets, recognising the important role that pets play in many people's lives.

The Chair asked for clarification of when permission would be needed, for example if a tenant wanted only one pet such as a cat or dog, would they need permission. In response to this, permission was not needed for keeping one suitable domestic pet.

Geoff Clark explained that the policy did not go into detail in terms of the types, sizes and numbers of pets that required permission, but was more focussed on reasonableness and suitability, with the emphasis being on ensuring pets were being cared for, were not causing a nuisance to surrounding neighbours and that there were no dangerous animals.

Margaret Wilson asked about point 13 – "Risks / Opportunities" which states that "the remaining 11 properties have been recorded following reported incidents involving aggressive or dangerous behaviour by dogs." She asked whether tenants were able to find out if they were on this register as there could be vexatious reports from neighbours.

Clark advised that information relating to the locations of dangerous dogs was confidential. He explained that all reports of dangerous dogs would be investigated and, where allegations were found to be unsubstantiated, no further action would be taken. He added that any vexatious or malicious reports would be addressed through the appropriate investigation process.

Julie Fletcher said that the register also helped identify properties with dangerous dogs which could pose a risk for visiting officers.

Jim Watson asked whether anyone else was made aware of this register, for example the police.

Geoff Clark confirmed that the police did hold a register of dangerous dogs.

Estate Services and Communal Areas Policy (Housing)

Julie Fletcher advised that this policy had recently been reviewed by the policy panel and that it set out service standards and inspections processes for both external and internal communal areas.

Geoff Clark added that a great deal of the work being carried out under this policy was not new and that the policy brought together existing workstreams.

Margaret Wilson raised the issue of people parking on grassed areas. She said that it was acceptable during the summer but in the winter or in bad weather it caused issues. She added that inspecting estates at different times of the day and year was important, as inspecting estates in the middle of the day in good weather may not show the same issues that arose when everyone was at home or if the weather was bad.

Geoff Clark acknowledged this point and commented that informal inspections by Housing Officers were done at different times of the day. He said that we have added a formal estate inspection in winter to compare to issues raised in the warmer months.

Geoff Clark reported that car parking was an issue generally, but there were limited options on our estates. He said that we were always looking for different solutions without having to pave over all of the green space.

Keeping Homes free from Hazards

Julie Fletcher explained that following Awaab's Law we published a Damp and Mould Policy. She said there were now more hazards that needed to be considered alongside damp and mould and that this policy brought them all together. She added that Awaab's Law had also put timescales on responding to reports of hazards. She said that a lot of work had been done behind the scenes to set up how these reports were to be monitored and recorded.

Margaret Wilson commented that there was a direct link between this policy and the Tenant Census.

Julie Fletcher agreed that having a better understanding of tenants' individual circumstances would enable the council to priorities work more effectively, as a particular hazard may present a greater risk to some tenants than to others, depending on their specific neds and vulnerabilities.

Amy Stock said that it was raised at the TPAS conference that tenants recently attended that Hoarding and Anti-Social Behaviour were also issues to consider.

Geoff Clark agreed and commented that hoarding cases were very complex, often with mental health issues that needed to be addressed. He said there was always a balance between ensuring the health and safety of the tenant and surrounding homes, and dealing with the sensitive mental health issues related to hoarding. He added that a great deal of work goes into dealing with these cases.

4.5 Elected Tenant / Residential Leaseholder Representative Guide

Julie Fletcher referred to the guide and explained that the tenants and leaseholder representatives had attended a meeting to discuss this document. She added that it was raised at the HQN mock inspection that it was not overly clear what the tenant representative's role was and what the expectations were.

The Chair commented that it might be useful to have a guide for the role of Councillors on this board.

Julie Fletcher said there was the terms of reference that Councillors could refer to. She added that as Cllr Wilson was stepping down from the board and there would be a new member, we may want to look at creating a document to give them more clarity on the role.

Action: Dave Armitage

4.6 Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) Annual Report 2025 / 2026

Julie Fletcher explained that the original report that was issued contained some errors in the data published. She said the numbers were not incorrect but the filters that had been applied were. She explained that when the question “Have you raised a complaint in the last 12 months?” was asked, it should only record the satisfaction of those who answered yes to this question, however the previous report had included all tenants who answered this question, regardless of if they had raised a complaint in the last 12 months or not. She said it had affected four of the measures overall, with only one of the four measures going down in satisfaction (in relation to complaints), and the others going up.

Julie Fletcher reported that overall, the report was positive although an area we still needed to look at was complaints handling. She said we were recruiting an officer to deal with complaints handling and monitoring as the number of complaints we were receiving had doubled since last year. She added that this was a national trend and may not be an indicator of poor service but rather that more people were aware of how to raise a complaint. She said the time we took to respond to complaints was something we would be working on and the new officer would help with this issue.

4.7 Annual Complaints Report and Self-Assessment of the Complaints Code

Julie Fletcher referred to the report included in the pack and explained that it was an annual report that we were required to submit to the Housing Ombudsman and publish on our website. She highlighted that most complaints were related to repairs as this was the main reason for tenants interacting with us. She added that we published the Complaints Policy last year which meant we were now fully compliant.

The Chair clarified that this report was for the Housing Ombudsman and the TSM’s report was for the Housing Regulator. He said that the Housing Regulator was who we would be inspected by.

Julie Fletcher confirmed that that was correct and that they were two separate bodies, however, they did speak to each other.

4.8 Approval of Service Plan

Julie Fletcher referred to the Housing Service Plan included in the pack and said that it was an internal document that was put together by Housing Service Managers setting out priorities for the coming year. She asked the tenant representatives if the key actions we had highlighted were the right actions or if there was anything missing from those actions.

The Chair said that he was surprised to not see Local Government Reorganisation mentioned in the report.

Julie Fletcher explained that there would be more consideration for that once we knew what option had been chosen for the new authority but was likely to feature at a corporate level.

The Chair commented that the Development Corporation was also not mentioned in the report as a risk.

Julie Fletcher explained that she did not think they were aware of the Development Corporation at the time of developing the service plan. She said that this report was focused on housing so there may be more in the Corporate Plan around those issues.

Margaret Wilson raised an issue about the allocation of homes and what consideration was given to allocating homes such as flats to those with accessibility needs or with children in prams etcetera. She said that when people were desperate for a home they would take anything, however, it may not be suitable for them in the long term.

Julie Fletcher explained that there was a Lettings Policy that was reviewed regularly and could be something that tenants could look at when it was reviewed. She added that this was not a tenant specific policy and had a wider consultation, however, she would look at when it was due to be reviewed and she would ensure that tenants were included in the consultation.

Action: Julie Fletcher

4.9 Review of Performance Reports

Julie Fletcher explained that following the HQN Mock Inspection, it was highlighted that the performance reporting structure was confusing, with different reports going to different audiences, with no clear line of oversight. A new report has therefore been created that includes all the information in one report. She said that this report would be presented to the HEB as currently it was only reviewed by the TSM and KPI Panel.

5. Standing Items

5.1 Forward Plan

Julie Fletcher referred to the Forward Plan in the pack and advised which items would be included in the agenda for the meeting in September 2026. She said the Asset Management Strategy was being worked on with consultants and would then be reviewed by tenants. She said Local Government Review (LGR) had been added as a new item as we should have more details of what this would look like by September 2026.

Julie Fletcher said a Recruitment Protocol had also been added as a new item which would look at how and when we could involve tenants in the recruitment process of new housing staff.

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 17 March 2026. He added that the contract for our Lifeline Service for Sheltered Housing tenants was due to be reviewed and we would be looking at a joint procurement with Cambridge City Council. He said that tenants would be given the opportunity to be involved in this process.

Ivor Grant said that he had raised an issue that his lifeline was still not connected to his smoke alarm.

Geoff Clark explained that this issue had been escalated.

Eddie Spicer added that they have had some issues finding someone to carry out the work but it was a simple fix.

Margaret Wilson asked whether the digital switchover would affect lifeline alarms.

Geoff Clark explained that this was part of a different piece of work but we have been working on replacing units to be ready for the digital switchover.

Margaret Wilson asked if there would be any change to how it would operate.

Eddie Spicer explained that the way it operated would not change and it would only be the phone line that would change from analogue to digital.

5.3 Tenant Satisfaction Measures and Key Performance Indicators Panel – Annual Report

The notes from the panel meeting held on 26 May 2026 were included in the pack and were noted by the board.

6. Any Other Business (AOB)

6.1 Meeting Times

Julie Fletcher reported that at the pre-meeting held before the board meeting today, tenant representatives said that the meeting times were not the most convenient for those who worked. She said we would look at setting meeting times later in the evening in order to make it easier to attend.

Action: Bronwen Taylor

6.2 Intern looking at how to Engage with Younger Tenants

Julie Fletcher advised that we have an intern in Housing Strategy working with the Resident Involvement team and one of her projects was to work on how we can engage with younger tenants.

Amy Stock and Vivienne Till expressed a wish to feed into this project.

6.3 Re-let Procedure

Margaret Wilson said that it was discussed at a previous meeting that the procedure for re-lets would be looked at, specifically what tenants were asked to remove from their homes at the end of their tenancy.

Julie Fletcher advised that Dave Armitage would be putting together a scrutiny project tenant group to look at this in detail.

7. Meeting Dates

The Chair referred to the meeting dates as follows:

- 24 September 2026 – Thursday (Teams meeting / venue to be confirmed)
- 10 December 2026 – Thursday (Teams meeting / venue to be confirmed)
- 23 March 2027 – Tuesday (Teams meeting / venue to be confirmed)

Julie Fletcher advised that the next meeting date may have to be changed to ensure that the performance report was included as they may need longer to collate the data. She added that the times may be amended as discussed in item 6.1 above.

8. Closing

The Chair thanked Julie Fletcher for the huge amount of work she had put into these items.

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting ended at 3.30pm.