

# Housing Performance Panel

## Minutes of the Quarterly Meeting

held on Thursday, 14 March 2024

from 1pm to 4pm via Zoom

**Attendees:** Cllr John Batchelor

Brian Burton

Eleni Koutso

Les Rolfe

Patricia Hall

Paul Bowman

**By Invitation:** Elaine Phillips (Mears)

Geoff Clark (SCDC – Service Manager – Tenancy and Estates)

Grace Andrews (SCDC – Data Quality and Improvement Team Leader)

Dave Armitage (SCDC – Resident Involvement Officer Team Leader)

Bronwen Taylor (SCDC – Resident Involvement Officer) – Minute taker

**Apologies:** Peter Campbell (Chair)

Eddie Spicer (SCDC – Service Manager – Housing Assets)

## 1. Welcome and Apologies

At the last meeting, the Chair advised that he would be on leave and asked Eddie Spicer to chair this meeting. As Eddie Spicer was also on leave, due to a family bereavement, Geoff Clark chaired the meeting.

Geoff Clark welcomed everyone to the meeting at 1.04pm.

Apologies were received from Peter Campbell and Eddie Spicer.

## 2. Quorum

The meeting was quorate.

### **3. Minutes of previous meeting – 7 December 2023**

The Chair referred to the minutes of the meeting held on 7 December 2023, which were approved by the panel.

### **4. Matters Arising from previous Meeting – 7 December 2023**

#### **4.1 Repairs Performance Group (Item 5.2)**

Bronwen Taylor advised that she had queried and followed up with Eddie Spicer however had not received a response. She added that once she received the correct document, she would upload it to the website.

Geoff Clark advised that Eddie Spicer had been on leave the week before last and again this week, however, he would raise this issue with him when he returned from leave.

Les Rolfe said that this was an old issue that went back to 7 December 2023.

Geoff Clark apologised and said he would provide an answer as soon as possible.

#### **4.2 SCDC – Review of Quarter 2 Performance Data (Item 5.3)**

The details of the Section 141 notice that had been issued by another authority were emailed to Paul Bowman on 30 January 2024.

#### **4.3 Estate Inspection Reports (Item 5.6)**

Geoff Clark advised that the Estate Inspection worksheet was approximately 95% actioned with a few items still outstanding, however were currently being worked on, and he had asked the Housing Service Officers (HSOs) to ensure that the report was up to date by the end of the following week.

### **5. Standing Items**

#### **5.1 Mears Group – Review of Quarter 3**

Elaine Phillips, from Mears, referred to the report in the pack and said that there had been some improvement in Responsive Repairs, especially “R3 – % Routine repairs exceeding 20 working days for completion” due to working hard with their resources and the recent recruitment drive they had as well as the new sub-contractors. She added that one area

that was still a challenge was the roof repairs however, they were working hard with their roofing contractors.

Elaine Phillips reported that “O4 – Overall Customer Satisfaction (all workstreams) was lower than the target and this was due to burst pipes and being heating season. She said that overall the “Voids” had improved, however they were still struggling with the 10-day voids.

Paul Bowman said that Elaine Phillips had reported that the heating repairs had created the problem with the customer satisfaction target, and he asked how this had affected it.

Elaine Phillips said although they met the targets for heating repairs, tenants would mark it low due to not having any heating and not on the actual heating repair.

Paul Bowman asked if it was about managing the tenants’ expectations.

Elaine Phillips said that the data and feedback did not show that trend on this occasion.

Geoff Clark said that temporary heating would be offered to tenants and that the parameters were being met.

Elaine Phillips said that this was always the trend with seasonal repairs.

Les Rolfe said that some tenants expected the heating repair to happen instantly.

Cllr Batchelor referred to the five, 10 and 25-day contracts and asked how the contract worked and if it was a fixed price or if it was negotiated.

Elaine Phillips explained that this contract was a “Price per Void” and they received a fixed amount, however anything above that got paid by the SORs.

Geoff Clark said that the quicker we secured a new tenancy, the more rent we could collect.

Cllr Batchelor asked if extra costs were incurred when a repair took longer than the specified time and was that cost for Mears or SCDC?

Elaine Phillips explained that should additional work be identified, for example for a 10-day void, then costs over and above would be agreed and charged.

Geoff Clark said that it was agreed between Mears and SCDC.

## **5.2 Repairs Performance Group**

Geoff Clark apologised that the report was not available as Eddie Spicer had taken leave at short notice.

Paul Bowman said that this issue had been raised previously with Eddie Spicer. He said that as the monthly meetings had been cancelled, it was agreed that copies of the monthly reports would be sent to the tenant representatives, however, they had not received any yet. Geoff Clark said he would raise this with Eddie Spicer and get the reports distributed.

### **5.3 SCDC – Review of Quarter 3 Performance Data**

Grace Andrews referred to the slides on the Performance Data for Quarter 3, which were emailed to the panel, and said that they were an overview of the report that was included in the pack. She said that 14 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) had either improved or maintained performance from the last quarter, of which 12 were within target. She said three had shown a decline and were not in target.

Grace Andrews highlighted some key indicators that had either improved, declined or been maintained, as follows:

- Housing Options and Advice ('Number of households with family commitments who have been accommodated in B&B for longer than 6 weeks') – maintained
- Average relet time – average of 31 days – declined
- Satisfaction with response repairs – improved
- Rent Arrears – declined
- Proportion of homes with a valid Gas Safety Certificate – declined

### **5.4 SCDC – Review of Quarter 3 Complaints Data**

Grace Andrews went through the Complaints and Compliments Data for Quarter 3 as follows:

- 28 complaints received – lower than in quarter 2
- 90% complaints were received digitally, which was lower, with 52% via the portal
- Responded within deadline – 57% (target is 80%) – declined
- 54% of all complaints received related to Repairs and Maintenance, with the top category being "Failure to Act" (32%)
- 66 compliments received – year to date – improvement from last year

Paul Bowman referred to the "54% of all complaints received" and asked to what extent we could drill down on this figure to find the cause, as it seemed to be a common figure and

how could it be alleviated. He asked if it was because of a shortfall of information being given to people who were complaining.

Grace Andrews said there was a wide range of issues that tenants could complain about, however, most complaints were about “communication”.

A discussion on complaints was held.

Les Rolfe referred to the “57% Responded within deadline” and said there was a definite failure in staff actioning the complaint and keeping tenants informed.

Geoff Clark advised that we had responded to the complainants, however, had not closed them down and they rolled into business as usual, and where different officers were involved, it took a while to gather the information. He said that in some situations, the tenant came back with further queries related to the complaint but not specific to the complaint. He added that the process had not been followed.

Grace Andrews said that our policy was that all queries were followed up in writing whether they were by telephone or a face-to-face query.

Les Rolfe said that this was a policy that needed to be instilled in officers otherwise they would forget to respond in writing as they were too busy driving around their areas.

Geoff Clark agreed that it was important that we followed our procedures.

Paul Bowman referred to processes not being followed and asked to what extent the four-day week had made the processes difficult to follow.

Geoff Clark said that it had not affected the process.

## **5.5 Tenant Satisfaction Measures**

Grace Andrews referred to the monthly report included in the pack and said that these reports would be going live from 1 April 2024, and would be submitted to the government through their portal. She added that we had until 28 June 2024 to submit our results and they would be for the financial year. She said that this data was calculated differently to the usual KPIs as this was only for landlord responsibility data. She went through the report.

A discussion on the TSMs was held.

## 6. New Matters

### 6.1 Resident Involvement Framework Review Update

Dave Armitage advised that meetings were held with officers and tenant representatives on 5 February 2024 and 6 March 2024 to discuss and finalise the structure of the new framework. He said that this was the last Housing Performance Panel meeting and it would be replaced by the new structure made up of three panels which were:

- Contracts Review Panel
- TSM and KPI Review Panel
- Policy and Procedure Panel

Dave Armitage said the panels would feed into the Housing Engagement Board (HEB) who would then form Task and Finish Scrutiny Groups on issues they felt were necessary. He said each panel would be Chaired by existing tenant representatives and we had a volunteer to Chair for each panel and most of the tenant volunteers had advised which panel they would like to be a part of. He added that each panel was not exclusive and tenant representatives could join any panel that they had an interest in. He said this structure had been agreed by tenant representatives and senior management within Housing.

Dave Armitage said the Resident Involvement team would look at suitable meeting dates for each panel in order to feed into the HEB in a timely manner and that some topics would have more regular meetings than others. He added that we were looking at other activities to get the tenant involvement function more visible and suggestions were using comms, having armchair readers on specific policies who did not want to join a panel but wanted a more flexible interaction, area action days, for example areas with high litter or fly tipping, and getting out to the estates with tenant volunteers to make ourselves more visible and to get more recruitment.

Dave Armitage said that this had been agreed on principal and there may be some changes as we went along. He said that this would be implement from 1 April 2024 when the new legislation came into effect.

Paul Bowman said one issue that we may have was keeping records of the meetings and suggested that rather than have a secretary to take notes, that meetings were recorded with captions and have a policy for this.

Bronwen Taylor said that Zoom meetings were recorded but she had been advised that they were only saved for one month after being recorded, however, she would look back

on recordings from previous meetings. She added that the Chair would be responsible for taking minutes or notes of the meeting and that would be the record.

Dave Armitage added that the Chair could nominate someone to take notes, however, these were things that could be looked at.

Grace Andrews said that she believed that there would be a General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) with regards to the length of time that meeting recordings could be held.

Cllr Batchelor asked if Terms of Reference (ToR) documents would be available for each panel and what the process was for agreeing to them.

Dave Armitage said that he was busy working on the ToR documents and they would be ratified and agreed to by the HEB. He added that he was hoping to distribute them documents before the next HEB meeting at the end of March 2024, however, if they were not ready, he would arrange a special meeting to go through them.

## **6.2 Tpas Webinar – Housing Ombudsman – Annual Complaints Review**

The Chair referred to the report from Eleni Koutso who attended the Tpas Webinar – Housing Ombudsman – Annual Complaints Review (online) on 7 February 2024 for noting.

## **6.3 HQN Residents Network Annual Conference**

The Chair referred to the reports from Eleni Koutso and Oana Sutherland (HEB member) who attended the HQN Residents Network Annual Conference (online) on 20 February 2024 for noting.

## **7. Any Other Business**

### **7.1 Repairs**

Paul Bowman referred to Eleni Koutso's report and said this followed on from the quality of repairs. He said that when a property becomes void and there were delays, this could be due to the previous poor repairs which should be made right. He suggested looking at the assessment of recently void properties.

Geoff Clark said he had weekly voids meetings with HSOs and surveyors about where the repairs were and each one was analysed in detail. He said that he believed that the

properties that took longer to turn around were the ones where we had been turned away in the past when needing to replace certain items, examples being, a new heating system, new electrics, kitchens or bathrooms, or when we got a property back, some elements were coming to the end of their life, for example windows or doors. He added that some properties were returned with structural issues.

Geoff Clark said that this did not influence the level of work that was done and he invited the tenant representatives to attend an inspection of a new void property in order to see what work was required.

Paul Bowman asked if there were accurate historical records showing work that had been done on void properties.

Geoff Clark said that there were records and Eddie Spicer would have the information.

Les Rolfe said that this would give them an idea of work done and the costs involved.

Geoff Clark said he would ask Eddie Spicer for the information.

## **8. Closing**

Dave Armitage, on behalf of the Resident Involvement team, thanked the tenant representatives for their time and work on the panel over the last three and a half years and said he looked forward to working with them on the new structure.

Geoff Clark said that he was at a meeting with tenants and leaseholders in Papworth Everard the previous day and he advised them that they would have the opportunity to get involved should they want to take part. He added that he would be encouraging participation when he was visiting our estates.

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting ended at 2.30pm.