

Housing Engagement Board

Minutes of the Quarterly Meeting

held on Monday, 27 October 2025

from 2pm to 4pm

in the Monkfield Room, South Cambridgeshire Hall, Cambourne

Attendees: Vivienne Till (Elected Tenant Representative) – Vice-Chair
Cllr Eileen Wilson (on-line)
Cllr Heather Williams
Peter Campbell (SCDC – Head of Housing)
Jim Watson (Elected Tenant Representative)
Margaret Wilson (Elected Tenant Representative)
Michael Luffman (Elected Tenant Representative)
Patti Hall (Elected Residential Leaseholder Representative) (on-line)

By Invitation: Ivor Grant (Tenant Volunteer)
Jordan Till (Tenant Volunteer – Observer)
Julie Fletcher (SCDC – Service Manager – Housing Strategy)
Eddie Spicer (SCDC – Service Manager – Housing Assets) (on-line)
Dave Armitage (SCDC – Resident Involvement Team Leader)
Bronwen Taylor (SCDC – Resident Involvement Officer) – Minute taker

Apologies: Cllr John Batchelor – Chair
Amy Stock (Elected Tenant Representative) (no apology received)
Jim Watson (Elected Tenant Representative) (no apology received)
Laura Nelson (Elected Tenant Representative)
Geoff Clark (SCDC – Service Manager – Tenancy and Estates)

1. Welcome and Apologies

As Cllr John Batchelor, the Chair, had tendered his apologies, Vivienne Till, the Vice-Chair chaired the meeting. She welcomed everyone to the meeting at 2.05pm.

The Vice-Chair advised that the meeting would be recorded for the purposes of minute taking.

2. Quorum

The meeting was quorate.

3. Endorsement of Policies

Julie Fletcher presented a flow chart on the policy development process, which was as follows:

- Drafting / updating the policy by service managers and relevant officers
- Review by the Policy and Procedure Tenant Panel
- Feedback incorporated and presented to the Leadership Team
- Presented to the Housing Engagement Board for endorsement
- Final approval sought from Cabinet

Julie Fletcher said that the Councillor Overview and Scrutiny Committee may review the policies, if it was deemed necessary, and that policies were subject to call-in by councillors which required support from five members.

Peter Campbell advised that the following policies were to be endorsed prior going to Cabinet for approval on 2 December 2025.

- Gas Safety and Servicing Policy
- Electrical Management Policy
- Water Hygiene Policy
- Assignment and Succession Policy

Peter Campbell referred to the following documents:

- Report to the Housing Engagement Board in respect of the Gas Safety and Servicing, Electrical Management, and Water Hygiene Policies
- Appendix D – Feedback Report from Housing Policy and Procedure Tenants Panel in respect of the Gas Safety and Servicing, Electrical Management, and Water Hygiene Policies.

3.1 Gas Safety and Servicing Policy

Eddie Spicer referred to the Gas Safety and Servicing Policy enclosed and advised that the policy ensured that we met all the regulatory requirements.

Peter Campbell referred to the comments report on pages six to 10 in the agenda pack and said that changes requested by tenant volunteers were made to the policies where applicable.

Margaret Wilson referred to page eight, point 2.4 and said that there had been a discussion about the wording, and she understood that inspections could not be done retrospectively as the leases were set, however, she said they should be mandatory.

Patti Hall said that for the past 14 years she had had gas safety servicing done annually and the reports were sent to Chris Brown.

Cllr Williams said that she understood that they could not be done retrospectively and asked why it could not be enforced.

Eddie Spicer said that we do contact all leaseholders and shared ownership tenants every year to remind them to get a service done and to send us a copy of the reports. He added that there was not an obligation that they need to do it unless it was in their lease.

Cllr Williams referred to page six, point 4.7 and said that the wording in the policy says that SCDC would also check any carbon monoxide detectors. She said the use the word “any” suggested that some properties may not have them.

Eddie Spicer said all houses that had gas appliances would have them and those houses that only had electric appliances would not. He added that the word “any” referred to more than one detector in a property.

Cllr Williams referred to page six, point 3.0, “service standards in the near future for each of the health and safety policies” and asked when they could be expected.

Eddie Spicer said that he was currently working on the documents and that they would be ready by March 2026.

Cllr Williams referred to page seven, point 4.7 and asked if tenants emergency guidance was available to tenants.

Eddie Spicer said that the emergency phone number had been included in point 1.4 of the policy.

Julie Fletcher advised that both the Ombudsman and the Local Government Ombudsman advised that a Council should only have one Complaints policy. She referred to the Council’s Complaints Policy and Housing’s Complaints Policy and said that they were similar, however, we were making sure that they were aligned. She added that each department had a Complaints Officer.

Peter Campbell said that the Complaints policy was not to be used to report faults.

Eddie Spicer referred to point 8.1 in the policy and said that the policy would be reviewed every five years, unless legislation required changes to be made.

Cllr Williams said she would like to know why tenants did not feel that five years was appropriate.

Margaret Wilson said that she agreed with Eddie Spicer however it needed to be recorded that the policy would be looked at when any legislation changes were made. She added that the Council was proactive when new legislation was introduced.

Cllr Williams asked for this point to be included in the report to Cabinet.

Julie Fletcher said she would include it in the report.

Cllr Williams referred to the “Gas Safety” leaflet referred to on page 8 of the agenda pack and asked if it was published on the website.

Eddie Spicer said that one was included in the tenancy packs given to new tenants.

A discussion was held on the visibility of the contact information.

Eddie Spicer said that a sticker was placed on the boiler that recorded when it was last serviced with the number to call in emergencies.

Ivor Grant said that the emergency numbers were included on the back page of the tenants’ handbook.

Cllr Williams asked if tenants received regular updates on the information.

Peter Campbell asked Bronwen Taylor to look into what information was online and provide an update.

Cllr Williams referred to page 10, reference 2.5 and asked how contractors proved that they met our health and safety standards.

Peter Campbell said it was referred to in point 2.5 of the policy.

Eddie Spicer confirmed that it fell under our operations and contracts procedures. He said we ensured that contractors were trained and this was maintained and reviewed regularly.

Peter Campbell said that the word “demonstrate” would be added to point 2.5 of the policy.

Eddie Spicer said that showing identification was standard procedure.

Peter Campbell said we would include an article about contractors producing identification in the next newsletter to tenants.

Margaret Wilson referred to page 10, reference General and said that it was requested that the word “void” be removed and an alternate word be used. She said that it was still reflected in point 4.4 of the policy.

Peter Campbell said that it was used in the sector as it was considered a technical term to define the period between the property being vacated and relet.

A discussion was held on what word was suitable to replace the word “void”.

Peter Campbell asked Dave Armitage to ask Tpas what the accepted word was.

Cllr Williams asked for the change to be implemented before the policy was presented to Cabinet.

Margaret Wilson referred to point 2.2 in the policy and asked for the word “aims” to be amended as she said this word was a bit vague.

Cllr Williams suggested using the word “will” as it had the caveat of “as far as is reasonably practicable” at the end so the double caveat was not necessary.

Peter Campbell said that he disagreed with this suggestion as the next sentence referred to the steps to be taken to protect. He agreed that it did not need the double caveat and that the word “reasonably” was to be removed.

Action: Julie Fletcher, Bronwen Taylor and Dave Armitage

3.2 Electrical Management Policy

Eddie Spicer referred to the Electrical Management Policy enclosed and advised that the policy ensured that we met all the regulatory requirements and was reviewed every five years, unless legislation required changes to be made. He added that the electrical safety regulations would change on 1 November 2025 and that some amendments might be made.

Cllr Williams asked to clarify that this policy would not be going to cabinet.

Eddie Spicer said that if there were major amendments then the policy would be reviewed. He added that from his understanding the policies would go to cabinet and any minor amendments would be permissible after that.

Peter Campbell said a consultation on the amendments would be required and recommended deferring the policy going to Cabinet.

Margaret Wilson seconded the recommendation.

3.3 Water Hygiene Policy

Eddie Spicer referred to the Water Hygiene Policy enclosed and advised that this policy mainly affected the communal rooms and buildings, and not individual properties unless there was a shared water supply. He said that the policy was to ensure that we were meeting the requirements of the water safety regulations, primarily Legionella.

Cllr Williams referred to page 18, reference 8.1 and asked for a link to be provided to report a repair.

Eddie Spicer said that he did not think that a tenant would look in the policy for the link to report a repair.

Peter Campbell agreed with Eddie Spicer, however said that a link could be included.

Cllr Williams referred to page 18, reference 9.1 – Risk Assessments on homes.

Eddie Spicer said that risk assessments were only applicable to communal rooms and buildings and not to domestic dwellings. He added that points 5.1 and 5.9 in the policy had been added for clarity.

Cllr Williams said that page 40, point 2.2 referred to “residential” buildings. She also referred to page 18, reference 14.1, the complaints page.

Peter Campbell said that the word “residential” would be removed from this point in the policy. He explained that all complaints were handled as per the Council-wide Complaints Policy which was set out in point 15.1 of the policy.

Action: Julie Fletcher

3.4 Assignment and Succession Policy

Julie Fletcher advised that as Geoff Clark was unable to attend the meeting, Peter Campbell would provide feedback.

Peter Campbell referred to the following documents enclosed.

- Report to the Housing Engagement Board
- Annexure A – Draft Assignment and Succession Policy
- Annexure B – Feedback Report from Housing Policy and Procedure Tenants Panel

Peter Campbell referred to the policy and said the following amendments were to be made:

- page 57, point 3.9 would be added to the policy to include a warning to fraud
- page 60, point 8.3 – last sentence on the page – the words “elsewhere withing the district” would be removed
- page 64, point 13. – the heading – Non-statutory Successors would be amended to add more clarity
- page 65, points 13.2 and 13.3, the wording would be amended to add more clarity.

Cllr Williams referred to page 70, Appendix B, Reference General, regarding “how assignment and succession rights are affected during a mutual exchange” and asked for this to be included in the policy.

Peter Campbell said it would be added under point 3.3 of the policy to make it clear.

Action: Julie Fletcher

4. Closing

There being no further business to discuss, the Vice-Chair thanked everyone for attending the meeting.

The meeting ended at 3.42pm.