

# **Tenant Board Meeting**

## **Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> August 2025**

### **Attendees:**

Liz Perryman	Tenant Board Member (Chair)
Gerry Crease	Tenant Board Member
Stella Morris	Tenant Board Member
Sara Szczepanski	Tenant Board Member
Paula Warren	Tenant Board Member
David White	Housing Transformation Manager
Georgia Mecoy	Tenant Engagement Co-ordinator
Kerry Lecomber	Tenant Engagement Co-ordinator
Cllr Ruth Hendry	Housing Portfolio Holder (Babergh)
Rob Longfoot	Head of Housing Management
Donna Williams	Sheltered Housing Manager
Justin King	Housing and Neighbourhood Lead

### **Apologies**

- Cllr Winch and Tony Cole
- Justin introduced himself and his new role, as did Rob and Donna as there were several new Board Members in the room.

### **Actions from last meeting**

- All actions from last meeting are in hand.

### **Declarations of Interest**

None needed.

### **Sheltered Housing Consultation**

RL took the meeting through a presentation and explained it as slightly contentious with lots of detail. He advised he knew that there were tenants in the room who lived in Sheltered Housing so aware it was a sensitive subject for some.

First, he took the meeting through the idea of decommissioning broadly and the timeline. He then shared a video outlining the issue of the digital switchover of telephone lines and the effect it would have on our warden call systems.

PW: Question about these properties being reserved for older or disabled – does that mean they would actually be general needs. RL advised they would be but we would put in a local lettings policy which meant it would be for over 60 or over 50 and disabled.

GC: Advised that what worried him is that if a tenant needs the facilities we're looking not to provide and want to stay in sheltered but would be forced to move could have a negative impact on their health and wellbeing. RL advised that they will be very careful and sensitive to each individual needs. It is a very real safeguarding concern.

LP: Enquired about the law regarding fire alarms and the need for them. RL advised that the fire alarm system in Sheltered was linked throughout the entire building. But in general needs there won't be broad fire alarms – they just have to have individual fire alarms and carbon monoxide sensors. LP then advised regarding GC comments those in Sheltered Schemes have social workers, carers etc. RL advised that SCC social care take care of people in

need and most people, despite any vulnerability or care needs, prefer to stay in their own home and get those services brought to them. LP raised issue of issue of person in her area.

DW advised that for all of the schemes in the proposal, none have a full fire panel apart from Manns Court, they all have fire alarms and smoke detectors that can be linked.

RL explained what's going on in the next couple of weeks, that we will be having individual conversations with them so will really engage with them and get feedback.

GC advised he's very suspicious about using the word consultation as it feels like it's one in name only. RL advised very real challenge – time constraint, financial constraint. Nothing is done and dusted and there are different solutions, but it is within Cabinets gift to make that decision in November. Please give us your feedback, there will be difficult decisions as we can't do everything we'd like to as the money isn't there and change is constantly coming at us.

DW advised that in last consultation when we decommissioned in 2017 these were all on the long list but we didn't want to include these at that time so the Cllrs listened and lots didn't go get decommissioned. DW advised the type and age of tenants has changed enormously. Lots of tenants moving in who work full time as the scheme age limits didn't change, so tenants needs are very different to how they were previously.

RL advised he's happy to be contacted outside of this meeting.

**ACTION: RL and DW to come to Tenant Board to update.**

### **ASB and Complaints Scrutiny Recommendations**

GM advised of an update on the ASB Scrutiny recommendations. JK advised he felt it was an excellent piece of work, and he had spotted some improvements and then seeing the recommendations being completed it was really working towards that. Great to crack on straight away with rolling out those recommendations. Not quite yet got a full team of CHO's so some of the rollout of training is holding off so they can make best use of it by training the whole team at the same time. Should continue to see improvements to our ASB service.

GM advised this information will come quarterly and twice a year to Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

KL shared the key themes and findings from the complaint's scrutiny project. The findings were split into the following themes

- Integrity
- Empathy
- Professionalism
- Internal Communication
- External Communication

The Tenant Board thought these captured the findings from the workshops. KL will next be using the themes to create actionable recommendations and share these at the next Tenant Board meeting.

### **Communication scrutiny**

GM took meeting through work with SL and GA about methodology and research into ways to carry this out and asked the room for their opinions.

LP advised she would like the transcripts but doesn't think we need the recorded calls as could recognise other people's voice. All agreed that was a really good point.

SM advised only issue with transcripts is you don't get tone of voice.

GM advised that maybe those in here could do transcripts and PW could listen to calls and report back. PW advised she was happy to do that, and all were happy to proceed on that basis.

So agreed to transcripts then PW listening into calls.

Would be a mix of issues; tenancy services, repairs, allocations etc. All agreed to that basis.

SM had some questions for the Board. Firstly do we want to look at Digital comms which all agreed should be included. We also previously looked at customer journey mapping so would they also like to look at CJMs as part of it which all agreed it. SM advised yes as CS might do it perfectly but could go to pot after so we must look at the whole picture.

Discussed interviewing members of the Customer Service team. SM thought yes but LP advised worried about the speciality. PW advised there are three groups – Money Matters which is rent, benefit, council tax, Housing and then General. Most staff trained on two skills but some on three however this should be just Housing. LP advised she thinks it should be someone trained in Money Matters also as could be to do with rent.

DW advised of need to include the line recordings and all the options tracking. He advised we could get a recording of the message and share it with the scrutineers. Frustrating issue of repeating that message every ten seconds after you've already said it whilst on hold. That's the feedback from this group. Repeat it less.

PW advised she could wait until there's a queue, phone the line and take a note of how many times the message is repeated. DW advised yes or we could just ask how often things are repeated.

**GM will go back to SL with that.**

GM advised that from meeting with SL she knows that team leaders review in 1-2-1s 'star calls' so that information could be shared with tenant board. PW advised that every three months they do formal 1-2-1 with team leader and look at 5 random calls both TL and member and they review them together, so it is quite stringent. GM advised she thinks it would be useful for Board to see that. All agreed that would be useful to see.

LP enquired if they could see how they decide which calls they look at. She asked if there was a way to say how far they were in the queue. **GM will check that and see if it's possible.** DW advised that we can look into whether our system has that functionality. However, we might be looking at solutions first so need to bear that in mind.

### **Council Housing Assurance Report**

DW took meeting through the Council Housing Assurance Report – a new performance report for Council Housing which makes it separate from other performance reporting. It now goes to four audiences; Tenant Board on a quarterly basis (financial quarters), Senior Leadership Team quarterly, Overview and Scrutiny biannually and Cabinet monthly. He has been asked by O&S to include comments from Tenant Board in their report.

PW advised it's a very big document and she didn't completely read it, but she feels the next quarter comparing would be more interesting and they would have more to say. All agreed and were very happy with the RAG rating. DW will then put those comments in the report to O&S. SM commented on the satisfaction with properties when let seemed to be dropping which was a concern.

### **Updated Complaints Policy**

KL has shared the updated policy following a review by the Housing Ombudsman and GM asked if they were happy or had any comments or concerns. GC has already made comments which have been noted and responded to. All happy with it otherwise.

## **Any Other Business**

LP enquired as to update on grass cutting and GM and KL haven't heard anything so they will **chase**.

Kathy Nixon will attend two meetings a year as DF reports into her which all are happy with.

O&S on 13<sup>th</sup> October which Complaints report will go to and have a TB member could attend – any takers? LP can if no-one else can. PW advised she could look at her diary. SM can also attend.

ARCH conference – offer to anyone to go. SM will check her calendar, DF is on the ARCH board.

Mock inspection – booked for end of October this year. DW took meeting through what that will look like.

Lastly CJ leaving the board as she's moving to a Housing Association property.