

Tenant Board Meeting

Wednesday 29th July 2026

Attendees:

Liz Perryman (LP)	Tenant Board Member (Chair)
Gerry Crease (GC)	Tenant Board Member
Tony Cole (TC)	Tenant Board Member
Tim Riach (TR)	Tenant Board Member
Sara Szczepanski (SS)	Tenant Board Member
Louise Tully (LT)	Head of Housing Transformation and Regulation
Nathan Suley (NS)	Housing Management Lead (Housing and communities)
Kerry Lecomber (KL)	Tenant Engagement Co-ordinator
Georgia Mecoy (GM)	Tenant Engagement Co-ordinator
Ellie Boudier (EB)	Tenant Engagement Intern
Vicky Craddock (VC)	Community Housing Officer

Introduction

LP thanked everyone for attending the rearranged meeting and made introductions. LP introduced Nathan as it was his first tenant board meeting.

Apologies were received from:

- Cllr Richard Winch Housing Portfolio Holder (Mid Suffolk)
- Cllr Ruth Hendry Housing Portfolio Holder (Babergh)
- Carole Richards Tenant Board Member
- Paula Warren Tenant Board Member

Actions from last meeting

- All completed

Declarations of Interest

KL advised board we need to vote on how we carry out void scrutiny but since two board members are missing, we will just discuss tonight then pass it on to Carole and Paula so they can read through then we'll vote online via email.

Neighbourhood and Communities Lead introduction and Tenancy Fraud

NS introduced himself to the board. He explained that he came from Colchester Borough Homes as an ASB Coordinator then progressed to be a Community Safety Manager looking at cases of DA, ASB, Tenancy Audits, Compliance – anything with risk. Police officer before that for 18 years in Chelmsford and Colchester. Came to BMSDC on 26th Jan and a week later Doug Stother (Head of Housing Management) arrived.

NS advised he leads on tenancy management side. Here to build and strengthen partnerships – Community Safety Accreditation schemes. Trying to work with police to better identify hate crimes, and how to support and signpost victims. Also trying to get established with mental health services as he believes there is a big gap there. Reviewed policies and procedures prior to Regulator inspection a few weeks ago.

NS reviewed what he has achieved so far at BMSDC (see slides).

LT mentioned that Tenancy Audits are an opportunity to check vulnerability data and reasonable adjustments crucial way to keep 'getting to know you' project data up to date.

NS advised that a Docusign form is being built to ensure data is up to date and accurate, and to see if there is anything we can do to tailor the service. Also helps to involve our tenants because some don't know they can be that heavily involved - opportunity for engagement team because if they show an interest we can send them over to them to sell the benefits of being involved.

NS advised of the introduction of the use of Sensitive Lets. NS noticed when he first came here that we were evicting people for ASB but weren't applying sensitive lets to give people respite from community tensions. Sensitive Lets now firmly in place. As soon as we realise a tenancy is about to fail, a Sensitive Let form is created and ready to be sent at the point of eviction, so we ensure neighbouring properties get that respite.

LP inquired what NS means by Sensitive Let.

NS advised that Sensitive Lets are essentially an extra level of vetting to any potential new tenants on the shortlist. If they have a history of ASB or criminal activity, they would not be suitable for that property. They are to encourage community cohesion because if people have had a rough time with a tenant, their trust in us, as well as their enjoyment of their property dips.

NS advised that BMSDC are NAFN members (see slides).

LT advised that NAFN holds DVLA data which speeds up the process of removing abandoned vehicles.

NS advised that SAFS will send a representative out to do an interview under caution due to ASB being a criminal as well as housing matter. They do asset and background checks.

NS advised what success looks like for him (see slides).

GM inquired what the process looks like once we've identified fraud, in terms of going to court and typical time scales.

NS advised that if there is firm evidence of fraud, we will give the tenant an opportunity to give the property back to us – immediately or within 28 days. If not, it would go to court – either criminal route or housing law route. Depends on level of fraud which route is pursued, if not both.

LP inquired if we have links with organisations like National Council for Domestic Violence.

NS advised that we don't, but they are a national agency so can be used by tenants and that he knows they encourage people to download their app so you can do referrals directly to them. He emphasised that we do have more local DA specialists, such as DA Navigator/ Project Worker, Gary. DA is on our agenda to make sure it is always dealt with positively. NS has heard mixed reviews on NCDV due to the introduction of charges for their services.

LP advised that occasionally for some training they do charge, while others are free. Not sure if organisations have to pay.

NS advised that he doesn't think organisations do have to pay. We had training at Colchester Borough Homes – and they get referrals on the back of that. NS says he can get them in to do some training if the board feels that would be beneficial to them. Rachel is looking at doing some ASB and hate crime training.

LT advised that we also have ambitions around exploring DAHA accreditation and training. DAHA = Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance. They offer accreditation to social housing providers around ensuring their procedures put victims first. LT herself is DAHA trained.

SS advised that she thinks the estate walkabouts are a very good idea - though they may not improve things immediately, once people get used to the idea and know that we are interested in making the area better, it will be a good thing.

GM advised that the estate walkabouts will be starting early September, and the list will be going out to the CHOs soon.

TR inquired if the walkabouts include temporary housing properties.

NS advised that they don't always because that would be a different team. But if temporary housing properties were within areas that came up as lower satisfaction levels, then yes we will. If we go to an area with lots of waste, neglect, crime etc. we would make sure we invite all the relevant partners, such as the temp accommodation team, public realm, and even police. Wouldn't just be BMSDC housing team.

Voids scrutiny planning

KL advised that we are at the information gathering stage of the Voids Scrutiny project and ran through a thematic analysis of comments from the survey (see slides).

GM advised that the thematic analysis is specifically from people who decided to make a comment on that same survey and if someone is going to make a comment, its typically negative rather than positive.

KL advised that she inquired with the Voids Manager when we can go back and view the four properties again. The one in Shotley anytime from Wednesday next week. The bad one in Grantham is still a couple of weeks away due to asbestos buried in garden, water leak, rats etc. Voids Manager will update KL this week on the Stowmarket property – a couple of things came up in the compliance checks. Ash Drive in Eye is not far away from completion.

KL to liaise with Tenant Board Members who went on visits as and when the void visits are set to happen – Action.

LP surprised by expectations gap.

KL advised that it is unusual for a tenant to move into a property and it exceed their expectations. They are only likely to comment if its negative.

LT advised that historically we've not been great at keeping a close eye on our communities and our tenants from a care perspective - but also from an enforcement perspective in terms of ensuring people are looking after their homes and gardens etc. The idea of the Tenancy Audit is crucial for us to update our data, check on vulnerable tenants, but also make sure stock condition is in good repair. Something we have developed is the Tenancy Handbook and the info available online – all of which help manage expectations about the property and looking after it. Something we will constantly review based on tenant feedback.

GM advised that when she was doing the analysis, she noticed that the expectations gap lies with a lack of communication of move in dates, repairs delays etc.

VC advised that as a Community Housing Officer she has witnessed lots of changes with the void processes, and therefore she can appreciate the frustrations of tenants that don't have a move-in-date - especially if they have to give notice on another council property. She advised that we used to do the viewings when the repairs were ongoing, but now the viewings are done once the property is ready which is a significant improvement to the process.

KL identified two streams:

People stream – communication, community, experience.

Place stream – property condition, repairs, lettable standards.

KL advised that there is a workshop planned for Thursday 20th August. Will be sending invitations initially to all tenants that have moved into a property within the last 12 months. If there are not enough attendants, it will then be put out in the My Home Bulletin. We can consider separating those streams into two different workshops or two scrutiny projects.

KL advised that the workshop is at Copdock Village Hall. The workshop has previously been organised as mixed tables of tenants and officers focusing on set tasks. However, another way of doing it is a 'marketplace' layout, which involves tenants visiting officers at set tables to discuss specifics. KL advised that the board will be asked to vote on this, but not tonight because two board members are missing. The vote will be sent out via email.

TC advised that with the marketplace there is less chance of missing anything, but the mixed tables get more conversation going. With the marketplace, some people won't be comfortable to sit with a councillor and ask tricky questions.

KL advised that we could do both the marketplace and the mixed tables.

LT advised that we could set it up as a marketplace but move around in groups of three to make it less intense.

KL advised that someone from the tenant board could be the group leader to offer guidance.

GM inquired how to get people involved who aren't available on 20th August. She advised that we've previously held scrutiny a week later, and that we could send out a survey, but she is conscious of survey fatigue.

LP advised an email or letter to explain what the workshop entails.

TR inquired whether we could create a WhatsApp suggestion board group.

GM advised that we wouldn't be able to use WhatsApp, but a suggestion box is a good idea.

KL advised that we could do it as a Smart Survey on My Home Bulletin that goes out a week before to collect suggestions.

GM advised that a letter should also be sent out to ensure no-one is digitally excluded.

LT advised that after the workshop any recommendations should be prioritised to outline the top three.

KL to share the slides with the board and an email about voting for the workshop – Action.

Previous scrutiny project updates

GM ran through the ASB scrutiny project from April 2025 (see slides).

KL ran through the complaints scrutiny project from September 2025 (see slides).

LP inquired whether the point of contact has access to the CRM.

KL advised that they do if they're housing trained.

LT advised that the Regulator adheres to 'work not recorded is work not done'. CRM ensures every contact is captured.

GM ran through the communication scrutiny project from April this year (see slides).

Any Other Business

- TPAS
 - **GM will send out a reminder about TPAS – Action.**
- 1-2-1' for August and September
 - GM advised that they take about an hour, which can be in workday, outside working hours, or weekend.
- Tenant Satisfaction Measures target setting session- tomorrow 14:00-15:30
 - TR not able to attend TSM target session.
- September get together
 - LP advised she's away from 14-20th. GC advised he is away from 23rd September for rest of month.

LP advised that she recently engaged with the customer services team to ask why they hadn't communicated with a tenant to which they responded they had called his mobile. LP advised that he does not have a mobile.

LT advised that that if organisations or contractors that go out to properties are on a different system to us, they should share that data but its still an ongoing process. Our data is updated due to 'getting to know you' project but struggling with data sharing agreement that data services is happy with in terms of risk. Actively looking at those agreements so we can make progress.

LP advised that customer services staff couldn't have been more helpful.

LP to email her experience to GM to it can be sent to compliments inbox – Action.