

Scrutiny Panel Meeting Minutes



Date of Meeting	21 September 2023
Location	Bradbury Court, Papworth Everard
Present	Linda Moss (chair), Alex Winters, Margaret Parker, Tim Bingham, Colin Hayward Jenny Victor (observer) Tracey Croucher (staff & minutes) Ian Cunningham (staff) Damond Farguson (staff)
Apologies	Keith Green Lisa Munden & Brett Fage – now resigned from the panel Helena Harris (staff) – has left the business

	Meeting Notes	Action	Deadline Date
1	<p>Apologies & Welcome</p> <p>As there were new faces to the meeting, LM asked everyone to introduce themselves and also gave apologies from Keith Green.</p> <p>IC informed the panel members that Helena Harris, Director of Operations, has recently stepped down from her role and will be leaving the Trust with effect from 22 September.</p> <p>LM also advised that Lisa Munden and Brett Fage have formally resigned from the panel following their 6-month sabbatical period.</p>		
2	<p>Confidentiality</p> <p>Panel members were reminded about confidentiality of meeting discussions and information circulated to them. Policies / proposals etc must not be shared with tenants until finalised and published. The chair asked panel members to dispose of papers in a confidential manner. Panel members can give papers to TC to dispose if they are not able to.</p>		

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	<p>Previous Meeting The last meeting was held on 29 June 2023 and minutes from this meeting have been circulated to panel members prior to this meeting.</p>		
3	<p>Actions from Last Meeting Agenda item 4 – tenant action plan to be sent to panel members – this is completed.</p> <p>Agenda item 4 – IC to add current open repairs to the KPI data for the panel to review – this is completed and added to the KPI data for today's meeting.</p> <p>Agenda item 4 – draft tenant annual report – interim meeting to be arranged for the panel to review this specific document – meeting was arranged for 31 August but had to be cancelled as document not ready for panel's review – this document is to be discussed at today's meeting under any other business.</p> <p>Agenda item 5 – TC to make changes to Scrutiny Review Action Plan – Reporting a Repair – this is completed.</p> <p>Agenda item 6 – compensation policy, estate home inspection policy, rechargeable repairs policy & repairs and maintenance policy – DF to make changes to all policies – this is completed.</p> <p>Agenda item 6 – lettable and communal standards – were to be reviewed at the interim meeting – these documents have been added to the agenda for today's meeting.</p> <p>Agenda item 7 – working in homes & buildings policy – changes made – this is completed.</p> <p>Agenda item 10 – panel to consider ways in which we can give tenants performance information – to be discussed along with KPI data at today's meeting.</p>		

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4	<p>Updates for Information</p> <p>Green Agenda (verbal update given) DF gave an update with regards net zero agenda. A draft net zero strategy has been produced which will go to the Board in October for approval. When approved an action plan will be put together to ensure that the Trust can work to the Government's targets for 2050., government agenda net zero by 2050. The action plan will consider 5-year periods at a time to make achievable and to consider any changes that the Government targets could make.</p> <p>The Trust have commissioned an energy saving opportunity scheme report which will cover commercial buildings and housing where there are communal areas. This report has now been delayed as the Government have changed targets.</p> <p>The Trust are working towards improving EPC (energy performance certificate) ratings in homes and considering changing gas boilers to other forms of heating and insulation in homes for example in loft spaces.</p>		
5	<p>Existing Policy / Procedure Review Panel members were asked to review the following housing policies and feedback changes and recommendations.</p> <p>Mutual Exchange Policy IC gave the panel an overview of mutual exchanges and what the policy covers to manage these requests when the Trust receive them.</p> <p>Feedback from panel: MP - page 3 – refusing mutual exchange – ground 2a – “his” change to “their” CH – asked if mutual exchanges are used often – IC said yes, we probably we have 10 a year, most issues tend to be around state of property left by outgoing tenant. CH asked if</p>		

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<p>we have enough control within the policy, IC stated that we have to work with guidelines set by Government.</p> <p>AW – page 6 – confusing about how many rooms are needed depending on how many adults and children you were housing. It is not clear in the chart and in some sections the age and sex of the children was stated/needed and in other parts of the chart it did not seem to matter. It was very difficult to work out how many rooms a tenant would need from that chart – IC will check this against the Government guidelines to ensure the policy reflects that.</p> <p>TB – no feedback002E</p> <p>LM – purpose & scope paragraph – last sentence – duplication, take a “to” out, service standards on last page move this section so that it is before the legislation section.</p> <p>Starter Tenancy Policy</p> <p>IC explained to the panel what this policy covers around first 12 months of a tenancy.</p> <p>Feedback from the panel:</p> <p>CH – under aims, are there any timescales in relation to any problems, IC said this would be case by case and timescales would be given to the tenant at the time.</p> <p>AW – typo space between A on first sentence, page 4 circumstances – tenant has not engaged with the process remove *willingly*, move service standards to before regulatory section.</p> <p>TB – no feedback.</p> <p>LM – page 2 section 3 second paragraph, does this section serve a purpose? IC said yes it explains that this type of tenancy and court obligations, section 6 move last para further up the section, section 8 “as amended” covers any changes, move the service standards up to before regulatory requirements.</p> <p>Rent Policy</p> <p>IC explained to the panel how the Trust set rents.</p> <p>Feedback from the panel:</p>		
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AW – page 2 typo under service charges – separate, page 4 section 6 service standards to be moved to before regulatory requirements.

TB – no feedback.

LM – duplication in paragraph 1 – *are met* was put twice, top of page 2 – acronym RICS (Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors) – use full terminology.

Cyclical & planned maintenance policy

DF explained that cyclical means it is something completed on a regular basis, the panel requested the policy have a definition of what cyclical means added.

Feedback from the panel:

TB – pleased with how the Trust are moving forward in using one contractor rather than using different ones.

LM – section 2 “business plan” what is this? DF explained it is the organisational business plan and changed the policy to read organisation priorities and business plan. Section 3 SAP rating, explain what this means. Section 7 equality and diversity policy should be changed to equality, diversity and inclusion policy.

MP – typo under section 5 ground maintenance gravel spraying

CH – section 2.4 can't see carports in this section – DF has now added. CH also asked if there is a timeframe for cyclical works, DF explained that stock condition surveys are carried out every 5 years and these reports indicate if works need to take place sooner than the allocated timeframe. The time frames are a Government criteria – when a stock condition survey is done, they will look at government standard and assess. Under frequencies how often do tenants check that against their property, how do tenants know that we are keeping to our standards, they would need to ask us, we don't have a portal that tenants can log into to see the level of detail of what is due for their property. AW said it would be really useful to have a portal where someone moving into a property could see what has been done and what hasn't.

AW – who checks if the cyclical maintenance is done? DF informed the surveyors do.

Grounds maintenance – do you know the areas where you can't cut? Is it worth including an explanation of why there are some areas that can't be cut. DF agreed this would be

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	<p>useful and will add to the policy. AW gave his feedback with regards what JN has spoken to him about at the annual home visit.</p> <p>TB raised about the Trust knowing about who the tenants are that live in the properties, this information is collected as part of the annual home visits.</p>		
6	<p>New Policies Panel members were asked to review the following new housing policies and feedback changes and recommendations.</p> <p>Damp & mould policy MP – missed an “is” out on page 3, section 5 CH – undersized radiators – tenants wouldn’t know what size radiators should be in their homes, DF explained that this is in as a guide so if a tenant said there was damp but there was an internal wall this might be an indicator of why there is damp, radiator covers – dust behind that could cause damp (moisture), the tenant is responsible to keep area around radiators clean however CH explained they could have an issue with removing the covers to clean. AW – no feedback. TB – no feedback. LM – no feedback.</p>		
7	<p>Lettable Standard Review IC explained that the lettable standards have been recently reviewed and a lot of changes have been made. The standards have been extended quite a bit, following discussion from looking at the standard of properties when let. All properties are now decorated throughout with a neutral colour, there is a significant cost to this. Investing in the properties pre-let means we hope this will encourage tenants to keep the property to this standard when handing the property back. Installing flooring was considered to be included, but the cost to this was significant and flooring is specific to people’s needs and</p>		

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	<p>tastes e.g. wheelchair users. The Trust will retain flooring left by an outgoing tenant if in good condition.</p> <p>IC also explained the void process to the panel members so that they understood the various stages where the property is assessed for what it needs before a new tenant moves in.</p> <p>Feedback: AW – feels this is massive step forward for the Trust, from his own experience of when he moved in to his property, if the Trust stick to the standard this will make a huge difference to tenants and the Trust TB – no comments. LM – positive step forward. MP – no comments. CH – good thing to do.</p>		
8	<p>Communal Area Standards & Service Charges Review (verbal update given)</p> <p>IC explained that along with the lettable standards the Trust started some work to look at the communal areas, do we have standards for these, are they right, do we need to improve them. The Trust found that all communal areas are so different there aren't really a basic set of standards that would apply to all therefore the Trust are going to look at each property separately and as all of these are funded by service charges that will impact on tenants then consultations will need to take place. Tenants might have differing views on what they are happy to pay for. There are over 50 sites to review that meet the communal area criteria therefore the consultations are going to take some time before any decisions are made.</p> <p>IC also shared with the panel the new housing service standards and these include a broad statement with regards services to communal or shared areas. This document will be sent out to panel members for feedback in due course.</p>	Document to be sent out	October 2023

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	<p>Feedback: Not all tenants can afford to pay for services to communal areas, some difficult conversations to be had when consulting on this. One size doesn't fit all therefore the need for the consultations is key.</p>		
9	<p>Scrutiny Reviews In 2022 the panel conducted a scrutiny review of the process when tenants report a repair. Following this review the panel made 14 recommendations to the Trust for improvements. The action plan was reviewed at this meeting, looking specifically at the amber and red recommendations as follows: Recommendation 2 – currently this work is being undertaken by a temporary admin position in the team, there are no current plans to make the temp position permanent therefore the panel agreed to keep this recommendation as amber until any changes are made with the admin role Recommendation 3 – the customer promise is still on the website, this should be a simple change to update and move. IC explained that we are not currently able to make changes to the website as a new site is being built and a new customer charter and the standards that sit underneath it will precede the promise – these are to be agreed by the end of the month and communicated to tenants – the panel feel this recommendation should be left as amber to be reviewed at the next meeting Recommendation 4 – same as recommendation 3 Recommendation 6 – changes to tenant handbook – this has been completed, action plan to be updated to green Recommendation 9 – Housing Facebook page – IC explained that the new website will have an alert page on the home page and this will link to social media posts. This recommendation was something that the panel felt might not be achievable therefore from discussion today have made the decision to remove this recommendation from the action plan</p>		

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	<p>Recommendation 11 – update the automated email from repairs and maintenance – this has been completed and the action plan to be updated to green.</p> <p>Recommendation 12 – extra telephone option for tenants chasing outstanding repairs - TB feedback that list of options when you telephone is very muffled and difficult to hear, IC to check this and act to rectify. DF informed the panel that we can access telephone data to see what the new telephone system is delivering, before we were talking about waiting calls and calls dropping off with tenants then chasing calls, the current data shows an average wait time of 57 secs for a call to be answered. We can also pull data on number of calls received, those that went to voicemail and calls made out. AW asked if the extra line would make a difference but DF said that the preference would be to have everyone calling option 1 – the panel agreed to update this action as completed. The evidence suggests the new telephone system has made a significant difference to the reporting process for tenants, action plan to be updated to green.</p> <p>Recommendation 14 – pyramid upgrade – DF explained the upgrade will be March 2024 at the earliest – the panel agreed to leave this recommendation as amber so that it can be reviewed and monitored until the upgrade takes place.</p> <p>Action plan to be updated and added to the Scrutiny page on the website.</p> <p>The panel discussed the possibility of completing a scrutiny review now that there are new panel members. The aim was for the panel to conduct 2 reviews a year however this has not been possible. New panel members will need some training with regards scrutiny reviews and will discuss this with IC. The panel hope to complete another scrutiny review by the end of March 2024.</p>	TC to action	October 2023
10	<p>Tenders / Procurement Nothing to report for this meeting.</p>		
11	<p>Capital & Planned Works Programme Nothing to report for this meeting.</p>		

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12	<p>KPI (key performance indicators) Review – Quarter One – April, May, June 2023</p> <p>IC went through KPI data for complaints and compliments for Quarter 1, the panel have been provided with the table of data prior to the meeting.</p> <p>DF went through KPI data for repairs and maintenance. LM asked if there has been some improvement with getting supplies in order to achieve the first time fix indicator, DF said this is improving and the next quarter data should show this.</p> <p>IC went through the rent and housing management KPI data. He reported that void loss is a challenge, we have a lot of older properties coming back which need significant work before re-letting and we have supported properties where working with local authorities are not filling them. Doing the improved work programme agreed with the new lettable standard is also increasing void times.</p> <p>CH asked IC to explain the different type of properties e.g. general needs, independent or supported living which he did.</p> <p>No questions or feedback from the panel regarding the data provided for quarter 1.</p>		
13	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>Scrutiny Terms of Reference Review</p> <p>The terms of reference (TOR) for the scrutiny panel has been in place since 2018. It was felt that with the recent new members having joined the panel that the TOR should be reviewed and updated.</p> <p>TC provided the panel with some areas to think about such as membership, quorum numbers and facilitation of meetings. On discussion at the meeting it became apparent that reviewing this particular document requires some time and consideration therefore</p>	TC to arrange meeting	October 2023

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the panel agreed to take this outside of the panel meeting. TC to arrange a separate meeting for the panel to meet so that this can be completed.

Thank You Vouchers Proposal

Panel members to provide feedback to this proposal outside of the meeting due to not having sufficient time today to discuss. Feedback provided by email.

Feedback:

LM - Thank you vouchers for those who resign would be a nice gesture but maybe it should be given to those who have been on the panel after a set time to be agreed by the panel.

CH – good idea.

AW - I have no objection in principle to the vouchers for members who resign. It is a nice thought and some people on the panel have put a lot of work into the panel.

Schedule of Future Meetings

The panel have been provided with dates for meetings up to the end of the financial year. The panel to feedback outside of the meeting if the dates proposed are suitable and how they wish for the meeting to take place e.g virtual or face to face. Feedback provided by email.

Feedback:

LM - As you know I am now very flexible when it comes to meetings so anytime would be fine with me. Face to face or zoom - not fussed but if we get tenants from further afield then would it be a mixture of zoom and face to face at the same time.

CH - I think face to face is best unless the weather was bad. I think time of meeting could 12.00 o'clock to allow over run if agenda is big.

AW - I would prefer face to face to zoom personally.

The next meeting was scheduled for 14 December, however due to a diary clash for IC and DF the meeting will be moved to 21 December, time to be confirmed.

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<p>Draft Tenant Annual Report IC informed the panel that the annual report should be completed by now however for a number of reasons this hasn't happened. It will be shared by email to all panel members for feedback as soon as possible. LM said she is conscious that this document has been on the agenda a number of times before and is taking a while therefore information will be outdated.</p> <p>Tenant Suggestion - Subscription Panel members to provide feedback to this proposal outside of the meeting due to not having sufficient time today to discuss. Feedback provided by email.</p> <p>Feedback: LM - I think the cost of doing this would outweigh the benefits. I do however think that the scrutiny panel part under the tenant involvement page is not as prominent as other information. The scrutiny panel info seems to be lost between the bigger graphics on the page so we are a shy whisper rather than a proud shout, maybe the link could be within or below a larger graphic so we stand out more like the other items on the page. AW - In regard to the tenant email. I am glad that the tenant contacted you to raise a question and discuss transparency. It is good that the tenant can ask questions about how things are being done. As a panel we are trying to make sure that Papworth Trust is transparent in its communication and actions. However, we have also discussed our need to be transparent and communicate what we feel we have achieved and discussed. We are on the panel to represent all tenants to the best of our ability. This is why the notes are on the website. I feel that your response was a fair one and gave information to the tenant on all the trust has done to make sure tenants know how to access the notes. I feel that as long as tenants who do not have access to the internet, or who cannot read well from the internet, that request a printed version can get one. Also, that tenants who have need of a different format to access the information can, that the trust and we, have been transparent in what happens in the scrutiny panel meetings.</p>	Document to be shared	By December meeting
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	<p>I am concerned that the cost of producing and distributing the notes of each meeting would take finances that could be spent on improving services/helping tenants. Or did the tenant mean the subscription service to be a fee that tenants can pay to access the notes? It would still involve a member of staff and you are not fully staffed to email/print/tape, address and mail the information.</p> <p>I agree with your email about the need to 'focus on improving this particular area of the website and communication to tenants before implementing any further services'. We could revisit this again in the future.</p> <p>CH - The suggestion is a good one as if they could do this, it would give us idea how many people read the minutes.</p>		
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