

Scrutiny Panel Meeting Minutes



Date of Meeting	Thursday 27 June 2024
Location	Bradbury Court Meeting Room, Papworth Everard
Present	Tenants: Linda Moss (chair), Margaret Parker, Jenny Victor, Colin Hayward Staff: Tracey Croucher (minutes), Ian Cunningham
Apologies	Alex Winters, Damond Farguson

	Meeting Notes	Action	Deadline Date
1	Apologies & Welcome Apologies received from Alex Winters and Damond Farguson.		
2	Confidentiality 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 of if they are not able to.		
	Previous Meeting The previous meeting was held on 14 March 2024. Approved minutes from this meeting have been circulated to panel members prior to this meeting.		
3	Actions from Last Meeting Agenda item 4: DF to arrange for communications to be sent to SBF tenants updating regarding the window installs – completed Agenda item 5: TC to provide panel members with details of the Age UK handyman service – completed		

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	<p>Agenda item 5: IC to make changes to tenant information leaflet & ensure this is sent out to all tenants in the April quarterly mailout – completed & leaflet included in mail out</p> <p>Agenda item 5: Tenant alteration policy – IC to make changes to the policy as per the panel's recommendations & policy to be added to the website – changes made, policy with Governance & Compliance Team to add to website *not on website yet, IC/TC to ensure this is completed as soon as possible</p> <p>Agenda item 5: CCTV in Papworth Trust Housing policy – IC to make changes as per the panel's recommendations & policy to be added to the website - changes made, policy with Governance & Compliance Team to add to website</p> <p>Agenda item 9: TC to update scrutiny review action plan & to be added to the website – completed</p> <p>Agenda item 9: DF to inform the repairs team that when a repair order is raised the tenant is given the repair order reference number - completed *LM did get a number when raising recent repair – general discussion about different types of work and processes for raising order numbers, order numbers are only given when reporting reactive routine repairs.</p> <p>Agenda item 10: Panel members to consider volunteering for the vice chair role to support when the chair is unable to attend – TC/LM have discussed with Colin Hayward – agenda item 10 for this meeting, to be agreed</p>	IC/TC	ASAP
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4	<p>Updates for Information</p> <p>Damond has given apologies for today's meeting, however he has provided a written update on Net Zero, Capital and Planned Programme and Tenders/Procurement.</p> <p>CH fed back that the report was well written and important to have in the papers.</p> <p>The chair asked if panel members had any questions for each section of the report. Questions will be put to DF to respond to separately *DF responses added by TC after the meeting.</p> <p>Net Zero</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CH asked what is low carbon heating? IC said this was generally technology such as air source heat pumps. DF confirmed electric or biomass products • CH asked of the damp & mould inspections - how many have taken place - how many needed work and is there a theme to causes of damp & mould? DF confirmed Q3 there were 9 new inspections, Q4 there were 72 new inspections. All needed follow up work but the majority of this work is to clean off the damp and mould and the cover the area with anti mould paint/stain block etc, other times PIV units have been fitted, roof repaired, heating repaired, leaks fixed, advice given on use of fans and trickle vents. Themes are bathrooms; unreported roof issues, poor insulation, trickle vents and extractor fans not being used. • LM commented that there are currently 204 Trust properties under EPC / C energy efficiency rating– The Government is proposing that from December 2025 landlords can't rent properties below that. What do you do if you if they can't be improved to meet the C rating, is that going to impact rents for other tenants and will impact on housing stock available. DF confirmed these 		
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	<p>regs are MEES regs which don't apply to social housing. Social housing target is 2030</p> <p>Capital & Planned Programme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LM asked for an update on SBF windows/doors. IC informed that work has started, we did test fits on void properties to ensure that any snagging was identified before actually starting work in tenants' homes • CH/JV asked what the shaky start to the kitchen install was. IC informed there were some contractor issues with subcontractors being used who weren't adhering to the programme of works. Contract meetings with Bell Group have taken place to resolve initial issues, now moving forward proactively, compensation is being given to tenants who were impacted • MP fed back that she had been door knocked by a contractor that she was not expecting recently. TC to feedback to DF • JV fed back a similar experience with a contractor attending to look at fire doors, this was a few months ago. TC to feedback to DF • CH asked how many properties identified for re-decoration as the timescale in the report seemed too short. DF confirmed there are 74 properties <p>Tenders and Procurement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CH asked if tenants are kept well informed with regards to roof works? DF confirmed this work has not commenced yet, we are in the process of tendering. When the contractor for delivery is known tenants and potential start dates are identified tenants will be kept informed at that stage • CH fed back the retrofit website is very useful <p>CH repeated the report was much improved and good to have in writing rather than verbal. CH requested this report is provided in writing going forward.</p>	DF	Ongoing
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	JV fed back that it is clear there is a lot going on and being achieved.		
5	<p>Existing Policy / Procedure Review IC made changes to the policy at the meeting.</p> <p>Rent Arrears Policy Changes identified: JV – 2nd page first para – “where this is not possible signpost to appropriate place” – CH agreed – change to read “where this is not possible signpost to an external agency”. High level arrears – “suitable means” what is this – IC informed it is an agreement with the tenant to pay in some way before it goes to court. Court orders / evictions – what support is given to those that get to that point – IC informed we have a commitment to refer “at risk of homelessness” refer to the local authority. Undischarged court order – in the event of a succession of tenancy the debt passes to whom succeeds tenancy. Management transfer is when we are moving a tenant from one property to another – variety of reasons including downsizing, ASB issue. IC – shelter provide a lot of advice & support. Housing Officer would be first point of contact to signpost to relevant support agencies where needed. Vulnerable tenants – Housing Officer would have early conversations, support where we can, refer to external agencies for further support.</p> <p>MP – no comments.</p> <p>CH – change “fundamental” feels too hard, enforcing – changed to important. Change maximising – change to optimise. Change “initial” rent arrears to “early” rent arrears. Court action – doesn’t explain the process or notice that the tenants would get. Fit this information in as a general point.</p>		

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	LM – pg 2 high level arrears – first sentence is too long, shorten. Pg 4 – homes not right to buy / acquire – should this be in if we don't have the right or what does it have to do with arrears. Remove.		
6	<p>New Policies</p> <p>The panel were provided with 4 draft template letters that would be sent to tenants where capital or planned works to their homes would be required. The panel were asked for feedback and recommendations for changes.</p> <p>The panel members fed back that it would be good to have the process in place first and then see how the letters fit into that process. The panel felt that the timing of the letters is key and then to ensure the letters have the detail that tenants would want, not lots of information they do not want.</p> <p>Ltr no 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Too long, too much information, remove information about budget and procurement • The works that will be being done, specification, meeting dates for samples, contractor name are important details but think about when the letter with this content is sent • Take off budget approval – letter should be sent once contractor is approved as sent out too early and then not hear anything for months no further comms • Timing is key to when the letters/information goes out • Tenant is informed what is going to happen and what will be available at the end of each day • Consider using visuals for process (flow diagram), thin the content down 		

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group meeting – consider adding that samples would be available to see might increase attendance • Dates added to website – not all have access to website • Contact details for who to speak to if any questions etc <p>Ltr no 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of word “if” in this letter, the letter at this stage should be sent because they need to get into home • What is the purpose of this letter – tenant just wants to know who's coming, when and why <p>Ltr no 3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Needs timescales and contact details if any questions • Some duplication from previous letter <p>Ltr no 4</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Duplication again <p>The panel also recommend some changes to the general Information leaflets that would be sent out with the letters:</p> <p>Planned improvements bathrooms: adapted bathrooms, need to add something that differentiates between general/independent/supported bathrooms, that tenant will receive replacement to what they currently have. Add h&s reasons to last sentence. Reword section 3 around accidental damage – need to clarify that it is not tenant dealing with claims.</p> <p>Planned improvements windows & doors: 5 point – dexterity problems, secure locks (insurance will ask). New windows with vents – section 2.</p>		
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	<p>Kitchens: accidental damage section as above. Is 2 rows of tiles enough where there is a hob? DF confirmed we do not state the number of tiles in the leaflet. Cookers, replace units, PT own the cooker & hob are these replaced as new. Not sure what is covered under spec. DF confirmed we do not replace cookers or hobs unless they are broken</p> <p>IC made amendments to some of the draft template letters and information leaflets at the meeting however there will be further work required before they are fit for purpose.</p>		
7	<p>KPI Review</p> <p>IC went through the Quarter 4 – January to March, performance information. The following were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Housing Ombudsman has updated the Complaint Handling Code from April and they have changed the terminology of “grumbles” to “service requests” • The Trust have had an external review of the complaints process and a recommendation to find a resource to look at satisfaction of complaint handling has been made, all staff who handle complaints will also receive complaint handling training • A theme for complaints is communication, however it is difficult to drill down specifically into this area but this area is being looked at in the process review • IC informed the panel that the telephone data will be increased and more information share • Void loss is still high, we are starting to have properties ready for relet quicker but still not anywhere near the 20-day target • Discussion around number of properties in the village that are empty (due to level of work required) 		

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8	<p>Social Housing Regulatory Changes</p> <p>The panel viewed a presentation that IC has prepared which gave an update to the changes that came into effect from 1 April for regulation and complaint handling.</p> <p>The panel fed back that it was a really good presentation, informative, detailed and explained the changes clearly.</p> <p>IC informed the panel that with the changes for handling complaints the Trust are required to complete a self-assessment and report against the handling code and publish this by 30 June. This will appear on the website in the next couple of days. These are new requirements from the Housing Ombudsman.</p>		
9	<p>Scrutiny Review – Action Plan for Review</p> <p>There are two recommendations that are still amber. The panel looked at these and made the following recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommendation 2: staff member recruited but not started yet, agreed to leave it on until September meeting • Recommendation 14: pyramid upgrade will allow staff access whilst on site to look at repairs raised, the panel agreed to leave on until September meeting but requested feedback from the team to be brought to the next meeting 	IC/TC to request feedback from the team	For next meeting
10	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>Pyramid Upgrade (housing management system)</p>		

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	<p>CH requested an update with how the pyramid upgrade has gone. IC informed that it took place as planned at the end of May. The system is working and on the whole the team are generally happy using it although it is taking more time to get used to as it looks very different, some things are easier some things not so. Staff are sharing practices and experiences. The system that sits underneath it hasn't changed, just the face of it that looks different. It's a good start and we hope to be able to roll out further enhancements such as text message facility in due course.</p> <p>Feedback from panel members regarding recent training & events attended The panel were asked to give some feedback about the different training workshops and meetings they have attended recently.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• CH said he found the TPAS workshops really useful• LM said the scrutiny training was good but we need to put into practice what we have learnt and plan for the next deep dive review• JV agreed that it would be good to put into action what has been learnt <p>Vice Chair Role The panel previously discussed having a vice chair role to support the chair as needed and as a back-up should the chair not be available for meetings. Colin Hayward (CH) was nominated by the panel members. TC and LM have met with CH outside of the meetings to discuss and CH is happy to take on this role. The panel were asked to formally vote and all agreed. LM informed the panel that she is not able to chair the September meeting therefore CH will chair. CH has requested papers are provided 2 weeks in advance.</p>	IC/DF/TC	Papers to be sent by 3 Sept (2wks reading time)
	Date of next meeting: 19 September 2024, 12 noon at Bradbury Court, Papworth Everard.		