

HOUSING STANDARDS BOARD (HSB)

Minutes

1st September 2025

2.00pm – 3.30pm

PRESENT:

Committee Members

Cllr David Carter (DC) – Chair

Tenant & Leaseholder

Representatives:

Property Standards Panel:

Hugh Hoad (HH)

Selena Ellis (SE)

Tenancy Standards Panel:

Jane Steer (JS)

Lucy Cooper (LC)

Leaseholder Standards Panel:

Annette Hogan (AH)

Frank Feldman (FF)

Officers:

Zulfi Kiani-Mackintosh (ZKM)

Wayne Mitchell (WM)

Nathan Kitteridge (NK)

Bob Purton (BP)

		Action
1.	Welcome & Apologies Panel Welcomed ZKM sent apologies on behalf of Councillor Stacy Seales	
2.	Declaration of Interest None	
3.	<u>Minutes of the last meeting (1st September 2025)</u> The minutes were agreed. WM explains the breakdown of temporary accommodation arrears was provided to the joint tenancy and property panel which will be going to the next panel on 17 th September. WM advised that the reason in the change of housing applications made	

	was due to the change in our allocation scheme and our system, they weren't being kept anymore because they were being duplicated. Anybody who wanted to stay on the system had to put in another application.	
4.	<u>Cabinet Workplan 2024/25</u> ZKM explains that there are two items going to cabinet on 11th September one being an update on the Regulator of Social Housing and the other being Repair Policies which are both on the agenda for this meeting.	
5.	<u>HSB Work Plan 2024/25</u> ZKM advises work has been started on the annual report data has been collected and passed on to comms team. Hoping to put together first draft ready for panel. Landlord survey hasn't started yet normally happens at the end of the year, no further update on the tenant lease for review action plan. The tenant satisfaction measures were submitted on time; a web page is being put together as part of the new criteria published by the regulator of social housing that we now as a registered landlord must put certain information regarding the tenant satisfaction measures on our website for tenants to look at. A link for website would go into annual report, any further information required we can provide. The building safety strategy came to the panel and Housing Standard Board, a question was asked about servicing of notice boards, ZKM confirms they are still being serviced, and he has the contact details so when they require servicing, he knows who to call.	

	LC asks if they can have a list of where all the notice boards are.	ZKM
6.	<u>Finance Report</u> DC asks that this is read at leisure and asks any questions are brought up for next meeting, ZKM also advises any questions can be brought to him after the meeting. Cost of voids was raised by HH, in relation to additional resources being required to address poor condition of properties. DC advises that going forward anyone who wants to transfer will now have to have an inspection on their property before this is allowed to proceed. This was the case before COVID but hasn't been carried out since and is now being reintroduced. JS and LC raised concerns regarding the condition of some properties that had been the subject of mutual exchanges, although it was noted that these were not void properties. WM explains about the audit program, which is ongoing, housing officers when inspecting properties can pick up on any issues with the condition of the property and any repairs that may need to be carried out so that when these properties do become void repairs haven't been missed and do not cost as much to rectify. DC suggested it may be helpful for a meeting to be held with a Housing Officer to discuss their roles.	
7.	<u>Performance Update.</u> Performance information was provided for Quarter 1 period (ending June 2025). WM advised that:	

	• Rent collection figure, percentage of available rent collected, the target for this year was raised from 98% to 98.5%. As of the end of June our figure was 97.94%- it was noted that it was rare to meet target this early in the year, the figure is a percentage point up from May and nearly half a percent higher than the previous year. • Former tenant arrears figure were much higher than our target, although these would reduce over the year by writing off debts that are irrecoverable. • Garage arrears just under £22,000, we have reduced our target to make sure we have a challenging target and taking into consideration the reduction in garages available to let. • Temporary accommodation arrears has its own agenda item on the standards panel meetings. As at the end of June it was nearly £8000 above target, although WM advised that it had reduced considerably since then and is currently sitting below target. We have no control over this as it depends on how any homeless applicants come through our doors and other factors that influence that, but it is continuing to be monitored. • Service charges figure builds up across the year in terms of amount of service charge collected, slight decrease from this time last year but exceeded target by 12.29%. • Gas certificates 100% compliant as of end of June. NK advised that: • Significant changes have been made to our void's procedure whereby HTS will do their own void inspections, draw up specifications and manage the property through and to handover. Number of voids is quite high; targets have been increased this year as we're going through a new process and need to make sure that we allow	
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	process time to bed. Figure is expected to improve gradually as there is still a large number of properties wrapped up in the old process. WM advised that: • Numbers in temporary accommodation is 365 against a target of 440, making faster decisions on cases to enable us to move people into more suitable accommodation. • Sleeping rough numbers, there are no targets for that as technically we shouldn't have any, according to figures at end of June there are 8 sleeping rough, 10 in April and 10 in May. • Careline provision target set is 97.5% of calls answered within 60 seconds, as of end of June we were performing at 98.2%	
8.	<u>Update on the Regulator of Social Housing</u> WM referred to the draft briefing provided to the meeting, and advised that: • There were no outstanding fire risk assessments, all were within target. • Going forward it was likely that this would be a Health & Safety update rather than specifically the regulators update as it will cover much more than fire risk assessments and the new policies that will be coming in. ZKM asks now that we are on top of the fire risk assessments what is the ongoing involvement of the social housing regulator?	

	BP explains that he believes the regulator appears once every 4 years, there is an improvement plan detailing the direction we are going in. The formal revisit is not for another approx. 2 years. DC adds that housing is continuing to hold regular meetings with the regulator.	
9.	<u>Repairs Policy</u> BP explained that had distributed copies of the repairs policy either electronically or in hard copy for comment and consultation feedback. Some tweaks were made to the repairs policy to provide clarification on how the right to repair may now overlap with Awaab's Law with regards to the responsiveness which may supersede or overlay with right to repair. JG asks what about the list of vulnerable timescales that was missing? BP explains that the appendix to the repair responsibilities was included as part of the policy. He advises the whole policies will be rolled out as part of training exercises to housing management colleagues, HTS and Contact Harlow. BP will be responding directly to any of the comments received regarding the repairs policy. BP advised it was anticipated there will need to be a revision to both the repair and compliance policies with decent homes 2.0 coming in next year as well as the second phase of Awaab's law and the second phase of additional hhsrs failures becoming part of legislation.	

10.	<u>Current Consultations</u> None	
11.	<u>AOB</u> HH asks that now Harlow Council has bought Terminus House will it be knocked down and will we be housing its occupants? DC answers that no decision has been made regarding if Terminus House will be knocked down or not, part of the council buying the property was on the understanding that those living there will be moved into suitable accommodation by the current owners. HH explains that the laundry room and common room where he lives in Greenhills have been closed. He goes on to explain that the charge for the washing machines have charged the same from 2012, if the laundry rooms are reopened will the charges go up? LC responds by advising that the charges are set by the company who supply the washing machines. HH asks if the common room is not reopened will his rent be reduced as the cost of window cleaning the common room is within his rent. WM advised he would confirm this. AH asked whether the new block at The Stow would be able to be rented by London Boroughs, as sign says they're not for sale just for rent. AH raised concerns regarding the additional demand on local doctors. JS asked if anything could be done to prevent them from renting to different boroughs, and it was noted that this was not something we could prevent.	WM

	FF raised a query regarding who is responsible for pavements outside people's homes that go to road, BP advised we would be responsible for the pathway leading to pavement if they are council tenants, although homeowners were responsible for their own. Assistance may be available via ECC. FF raised concerns regarding speeding in Potter Street – DC advised he was aware there had been correspondence between Cllr Purse and Essex County Council, and the Residents Association regarding the issue. Aware that this was being taken up but unable to advise what outcome would be.	
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The Date of the Next meeting: 13 October 2025