

HOUSING STANDARDS BOARD (HSB)

Minutes

29th June 2026

2.00pm – 3.00pm

PRESENT:

Committee Members

Cllr David Carter (DC) – Chair

Frank Felman (FF)

Officers:

Zulfi Kiani-Mackintosh (ZKM)

Wayne Mitchell (WM)

Hayley Gallagher (HG)

Executive Director: Sarah Jones (SJ)

Tenant & Leaseholder

Representatives:

Property Standards Panel:

Tenancy Standards Panel:

Leaseholder Standards Panel:

		Action
1.	<u>Welcome & Apologies</u> Attendees: Cllr David Carter (DC), Sarah Jones (SJ) Zulfi Kiani-Mackintosh (ZKM), Wayne Mitchell (WM) Nathan Kitteridge (NK), Frank Felman (FF), Hayley Gallagher (HG) Apologies: Annette Hogan (AH), Selena Ellis (SE), Mwiche Silwamba (MS),	
2.	<u>Declaration of Interest</u> None	
3.	<u>Minutes of last meeting (02 -02-2026) and Matters arising</u>	

	DC advised that he was still awaiting an answer regarding the beacon at Netteswellbury Farm and will chase this up again. FF asked if every flat in Harlow should have fire alarms, NK advised all council properties have an electric mains smoke detector and a heat detector, leaseholders are not required to have them and there is no compulsion that he is aware of for private landlords to have this installed. The Fire Service will install battery operated fire alarms for free.	DC
4.	Leaders Plan ZKM presented. Report given to each attendee.	
5.	HSB Workplan 2025/26 ZKM presented. Report given to each attendee.	
6.	Finance Reports None	
7.	Performance Report WM presented.	

	DC asked if it was known what the difference was in figures between the 98.36% rent collected and 98.50% Target WM advised he has asked this question before unfortunately it is not a straight forward answer so could not advise the figure. DC asked what is being done about the former tenants arrear amount WM advised a lot of it will be written off. There is a report for actions that would be taken going forward and the team are hoping to find ways to reduce this amount. DC asked if the number of garages demolished has had an impact on garage arrears, WM explained it is difficult to gauge the arrears amount as it is dependent on when the reports are run as a lot of SO and DDs are set up for the end/1st of month. WM advised staff shortages have had an impact on arrear amounts and that rent team is now fully staffed.	
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8.	Update on the Consultation on the Draft Repairs Policy ZKM Presented. As part of The Council commitment to its Transformation Journey. One of the Commitments we have made is to better Tenant and Leaseholder Engagement and reach out to a wider audience It is an exciting time for Housing Services, the intention to introduce exciting innovative initiatives, one being to carry out wider engagement consultation exercises. The Repairs Policy consultation is the first of its kind. We have used several platforms and methods of Communications to assist us is reaching a wider audience. Stage 1 of the Consultation – E-Engagement This included sending out approx. 7000 emails to tenants and 1500 to Leaseholder, also, including details of the consultation and link to respond on our website and portal. And lastly running a social media campaign to help promote awareness of the consultation Stage 2 of the Consultation – Postal Stage two commences next week, details of the consultation and how to respond will be sent to all	
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	Tenants and Leaseholders of Harlow Council via post in their rent and service charge statements. To date we have already received 305 responses and counting. Even though this is the first time we are using these platforms to conduct a wider consultation process, the thing to remember is that most of these platforms had already been tried and tested via our Landlord Survey exercise and our Ark Review. This is such an amazing, good news story, and I for sure, am super excited for what lies ahead for our Engagement and Involvement Service.	
9.	Results of the Landlord Survey and Tenant Satisfaction Measures A good news story and an example of you said we did. Housing Services had just completed their annual landlord survey in March 2026.which asks Tenants questions around the Tenant Satisfaction Measures which are a Statutory Requirement and questions about service delivery for the different part of the Housing Service to gain a Tenant Perception on how the Council is doing in delivering services.	

	As a Housing Service, this is not only crucial but vital is assisting us to continue to improve service delivery but also ensure our services are tailored around the needs of local people. 2023/24 was the last time we completed a survey which heavily relied on the post, in this year we received 636 completed surveys, 535 were postal 101 were online, a total of 4,000 were sent out. 2024/25, as the Landlord Survey now became a Statutory Requirement, the cost of conducting this survey using the postal option now became too expensive, it was double the price, we worked with BMG, who are the organisation who conducts this survey as this survey is completed independently. A new methodology was introduced which meant for the first time in the history of Harlow Council, we used an online email option as well as the old postal option. This was to ensure costs remain the same but value for money was taken into consideration. Just one thing to bear in mind, the Council were advised in advance by BMG who obviously are a company with many years of experience and are aware of how using different methodologies can change or have an impact of Performance results.	
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In 2024/25, a total of 4,500 surveys were sent using the online email option, 2,000 were sent via the postal option.

As a result, 766 responses were received, 407 were online, 191 SMS, and 168 postal, however, as mentioned before, the Council were advised in advance of Performance dropping, and they did, drop quite significantly, partially due to the newly introduced methodology, but also due to other factors

However, this is where the good news story comes in. In 2025/26, Harlow Council began a new Transformation Journey, new missions were introduced as well as a new commitment to the Residents of Harlow of a new level of improvement to Services.

As part of this journey, the Tenant and Leaseholder Engagement Service went through a thorough review. The aim of Transformation journey was to ensure that all parts of the Housing Service and the Council continue to improve on how we provide services to our Tenants and Leaseholders.

This transformation journey is still ongoing and there are many more amazing things to come, so how did we do.

Well, you said we did. If we look at the results of the recent Landlord Survey for 2025/26, the

	figures speak for themselves, there is a positive difference between the results of performance 2025/26 compared to 2024/25, and we are continuing to strive for much more better outcomes. In 2025/26, a total of 4,300 surveys were sent online via email and 2,00 via postal. In total, we received 1,200 responses, 842 online/email and 358 postal. This is the second year running that we have received a true representation of our housing stock. This is a positive good news story and has given the Council even more drive to continue to do better and achieve much more.	
10.	Update on the Review of the Tenant and Leaseholder Engagement and Involvement Service (Verbal Update) SJ advised this was a key set piece for council, overall strategy is to achieve C1 with regulator. DC advised Cllr Swords is to attend the next leaseholder panel to hopefully answer any questions leaseholders may have.	
11.	Social Housing Regulatory and Compliance - Update	

	SJ advised continue to meet with regulator monthly, focus is safety and quality particularly fire safety. From next meeting regulator is broadening approach to look at wider standards which all interlink with BHF.	
12.	Leaseholder Major Works Policy SJ advised we are aware of burden on leaseholders to recover costs of building safety work, when they bought their properties, they did not envision the cost of these works. Legal advisors have been approached to give as many options as possible to support leaseholder potentially in the form of caps or waivers, however, have to be clear with any waivers or capping as the burden may then fall on tenants rent amount or tax payers, brief to legal advisors to give flexibility to help leaseholders as much as possible. DC asked about the amount we are spending on council owned properties to improve, however this is not the case with leasehold properties as we can replace not improve so how can we avoid these properties being returned to us when lease expires and the properties potentially being in poor condition? SJ advised we are committed to exploring mechanisms to offer leaseholders improvement work at cost price + admin fee. Also speaking to legal regarding lease extensions as they can be expensive however, it is not in councils interest for leases to get shorter and properties returning, there has been changes in	

	the law recently which we will look to take advantage of.	
13.	Housing Asset Management Strategy SJ confirmed Asset Management Strategy to go to Cabinet on 9 July accompanied by Assets Management Plan – this is refreshed every year, fundamentals are the same. Assets management plan is more specific to our stock and how we approach stock condition surveys.	
14.	Current Consultations Internal Repairs Policy	
15.	AOB FF highlighted that he has noticed scaffolding has been left up long after work has been completed, longer it remains up the more money it is costing the Council can it be taken down right away? SJ advised once work is complete if they do not take scaffolding down they cannot continue to charge Council however, she will put a process in place to make sure it is taken down straight away.	

The Date of the Next meeting: **31 August 2026, in Committee Room 1, in the Civic Centre beginning at 2pm.**