

Property and Tenancy Standards Panel
Wednesday 25th March 2026
14.00 – 15.30pm Latton Bush Centre

ATTENDEES:

Tenants-

Frank Feldman (FF), Hugh Hoad (HH), Paul Perfitt (PP), Else Sinclair (ES), Fred Sinclair (FS), Selina Ellis (SE).

Harlow Council –

Zulfi Kiani-Mackintosh (ZKM), Nathan Kitteridge (NK), Jenny Kitteridge (JK), Jane Steadman (JST), Kristina Akgul (KA).

HTS-

Shakell Khan (SK), Gina Patten (GP).

1.	Welcome and Apologies	
	Cllr Carter, Wayne Mitchell, Debbie Hardy, Annett Hogan, Mwiche Silwamba	
2.	Minutes from previous meeting & matters arising	
	Minutes of previous meeting were agreed. ZKM to congratulated rent team on achieving the highest results in recovering housing and garage arrears payment – DONE	

3.	Update on the Landlord Survey- Tenant satisfaction Measures for 25/26 (Verbal Update)	
	<p>Fieldwork for the landlord survey is now complete. The process involved a two-stage approach: online responses (665) followed by SMS (177) and postal surveys (358). In total, 1,200 surveys were received—a significant achievement compared to 766 last year, representing the highest response rate since ZKM began working with Harlow Council. Independent firm BMG is currently processing and analysing the data. Initial high-level findings, which indicate an upward trend in satisfaction, will be presented to the Panel shortly. ZKM notes that the improved figures are largely due to the revised methodology employed this year.</p> <p>We have completed the mandatory Tenant Satisfaction Measures data collection. As part of our annual statutory obligations, we will submit the results to the government and publish them in the <i>Harlow Times</i> once received.</p> <p>No questions raised.</p>	
4.	Update on the Review of the Tenant and Leasehold Engagement and Involvement Service (Verbal Update)	
	<p>ZKM confirmed that the review's fieldwork is complete, which included focus groups with officers, tenants, and leaseholders, alongside consultations with Councillors conducted by independent</p>	

	<p>consultants, ARK. Nearly 600 responses were gathered and are currently being analysed. We have received the first draft of the improvement plan based on ARK's recommendations. This draft will be reviewed and presented to a future panel for feedback.</p> <p>No questions raised.</p>	
5.	Change to location of future meetings	
	<p>ZKM has announced that panels and the Housing Standard Board meetings will return to the Civic Centre, reverting to pre-Covid arrangements. A decision is currently being made regarding the schedule, specifically whether to continue meeting on Wednesdays or move to Tuesdays or another day. ZKM asked if anyone has any feedback:</p> <p>FF: Will Laton Bush meetings still take place or not?</p> <p>ZKM: All the meetings will be moving back to the Civic.</p> <p>GP: Monday wouldn't suit HTS as is there busiest day of the week.</p> <p>ZKM stated that meeting rooms will be located either on the first floor or in the Chamber, depending on availability.</p> <p>HH While agreeing to return to the Civic Centre, HH raised concerns about wheelchair access, specifically that the doors to meeting room 1 are too narrow.</p> <p>Action: ZKM to ensure meeting rooms have full wheelchair access.</p>	<p>ZKM</p>

	<p>HH prefer the meeting to be in the morning. ZKM corrected that only the location is changing not timing.</p> <p>No more questions.</p>	
6.	Housing Performance KPI'S – HTS and Housing	
	<p>HTS SK outlined that Harlow Council uses Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to monitor HTS performance, with specific unmet targets highlighted regarding non-dangerous tree works. HTS missed two KPIs related to landscape maintenance (specifically winter hedge cutting) and tree work; however, intensive work has been undertaken to clear the backlog.</p> <p>ES asked regarding landscape work. Do you go round and inspect, where the work is needed to be done? Are the trees and the brambles that need to be cut?</p> <p>SK confirmed that bramble cutting follows a scheduled program from November through March. If any areas are missed or fall below standard, tenants should report them to Harlow Council, and HTS will return to complete the work.</p> <p>ES complained about the low trees on the cycle track and overgrown brambles.</p> <p>HH also added that the slaps (Brim hills) in some areas are not suitable for wheelchair users.</p> <p>SK explained that there are three distinct areas of</p>	

operation:

1. **Paperwork/Administration:** Preparing documentation and initiating outgoing work.
2. **Bramble Management:** Site visits to assess, manage, and execute clearing work.
3. **Tree Works:** Dedicated specialists conduct inspections and plan necessary maintenance.

NK advised reporting all issues to Contact Harlow, who will determine if they are Harlow Council or Essex County Council responsibilities.

ES asked what about footpath of Harlow? Who is looking after?

NK responded that 90% is Essex County Council responsibility.

No more questions regarding KPI's.

SK presented the health and safety graph reflecting the past 12 months' performance. The figures are high due to an incident involving an officer last month, which significantly impacted the total numbers.

SK reviewed the complaints scale they receive from Harlow Council, including how the complaints are investigated and the proportion of complaints received compared to those that have been investigated.

No more questions raised

HOUSING Performance

JK explained the figures for rent collected versus rent owed. Rent collection performance was lower due to the Council's closure over Christmas and New Year. Former tenant arrears are above target, and the annual target will not be met. Performance in this area has been directly impacted by staff shortages, with resources prioritised toward current arrears.

Garage arrears at the end of December were above the £15,000 target. This is due to factors such as direct debit and end-of-month standing order payments, the Council's Christmas closure, staff shortages, and the prioritisation of current arrears collection.

Temporary Accommodation Changes Arrears – figures have reduced since last year.

ES – quired if the temporary accommodation is the house or a flat? How long the people have the temporary accommodation for?

JK explained that a range of accommodation is available, including houses, flats, and shared housing. Placements depend on individual circumstances, such as medical needs and whether the household includes children. Some properties consist of individual rooms with shared bathrooms and kitchens, and these are let under licence agreements.

ES – is the rent rate are charged for

accommodation?

JK responded that there is legislation requiring the Council to provide accommodation to individuals in need.

JK continued to go through the arrears.

No questions raised

NK explained the average re-let time, which is currently 72 days—well above the target. There has been a high number of voids recently, as properties are being brought back up to standard before being re-let. Although the process itself is shorter, there has been a backlog on the system.

Looking at the empty homes data, the number has reduced by 50. Typically, there are around 10–15 voids each week. When properties are returned, safety checks must be completed and any necessary work carried out, such as bathroom repairs, to ensure the property meets the required standard. With an increasing number of older properties, the new re-let process takes longer and is being managed in partnership with HTS.

Rental loss occurs when a property is vacant, meaning the Council does not generate income.

The number of garage voids is within target. The Council currently manages around 7,000 garages and has demolished approximately 800 garages since April last year.

	<p>ES asked whether the demolitions are due to the garages not being in use. NK responded that areas are targeted where garages are unused, require significant repairs, or where there are parking pressures on the estate.</p> <p>ES raised concerns about the lighting in the car park that replaced the garages in Ladyshot, noting that it feels unsafe to park there in the dark. NK explained that improving lighting in such areas would involve significant costs.</p> <p>PP asked whether old garage doors would be replaced where a block has a mix of new and old doors. NK explained that doors can be replaced if the garages are in use; however, doors from demolished garages cannot be reused.</p> <p>ES asked whether tenants could purchase garages. NK explained that garages have been sold in the past, but they are not currently available for sale.</p> <p>ES asked whether larger garages will be built in the future, as the current ones are too small for modern cars. NK responded that a few larger garages were constructed a couple of years ago, but the costs involved are substantial.</p> <p>No questions</p>	
7.	Current Consultation – None	

8.	Any Other Business	
	<p>FF stated that the street sweeper cannot clean properly because cars are parked on the roads. Debris then goes down the drains, causing blockages and occasional flooding. He asked whether cones could be placed the night before to prevent this.</p> <p>SK explained that the sweeper follows its scheduled rounds, so placing cones the night before may not normally be possible. However, if this becomes a recurring issue, it could be investigated and potentially implemented.</p> <p>No more questions</p> <p>End of meeting</p>	SK
	<p>Date of Next Meeting: Thursday 18 June 2026</p> <p>Location: Committee Rm 1, First Floor, Civic Centre</p> <p>Time: 2 pm</p>	