

Property and Tenancy Standards Panel
Wednesday 26th March 2025
14.00 – Latton Bush Centre

ATTENDEES:

Tenants-

Celia Candy (CC), Jane Steer (JS), Lucy Cooper (LC), Selina Ellis (EL), Anette Hogan (AH). Frank Feldman (FF).

Harlow Council –

Zulfi Kiani-Mackintosh (ZKM) (Chair), Wayne Mitchell (WM),

HTS-

Debbie Hardy (DH), Caron Mouncey (CM)

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| 1. | Welcome and Apologies | |
| | Nathan Kitteridge (NK), Cllr David Carter (DC), Gina Patten (GP), Shakeel Khan (SK) | Noted |
| 2. | Minutes from previous meeting & matters arising | |
| | <u>Estate Walkabouts</u> JS has raised this from the matters arising from last months minutes. Even though the Panel were provided with information, with a spreadsheet listing all actions, this was not in a format for Representatives to read easily. Rather than just | |

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| | <p>having lots of worded information, the Panel also asked for a summary to be presented in a statistical format. It was agreed that the following information would be provided:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The number of jobs picked up last year? 674 • The number of jobs referred to planned works last year? Nothing is referred to planned works, this is the purpose of the town wide stock condition survey. The estate inspections are used to pick up on issues happening now and deal with them. This may change in the future if there is investment in and changes to the way Estate Inspections are undertaken however there are no firm plans at this point • The number of jobs outstanding from last year? Due to the nature of these actions they are all completed as they have been actioned by the Housing Officer. These stats do not allow for HTS dealing with the job or not however. <p>JS has asked for both the numbers and data to be provided.</p> | NK |
| 3. | Update on the Landlord Survey and Tenant Satisfaction Measures for 2024-25 | |
| | ZKM provided the Panel with a verbal update, The independent Landlord survey was carried out by BMG | |

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| | <p>and is now complete, in total 749 responses were received, 611 were via online and 138 via postal. The process has been very different to previous years as we have adopted a different approach, previously we were 100% postal, now we are two thirds online. With the introduction of this new methodology, it has given the council to opportunity to tap into a different demographic, which included people of a different age group, obviously once BMG have provided us with there main report, we will then know whether we have managed to reach out people of different background, etc.</p> <p>Obviously as we have received responses from a different demographic, this has also meant there has been a difference in the performance results. Early results are showing that performance has dipped, however, BMG has advised this is normal, especially when responses are from online users. On a positive note, the Council still sent out a third of its questionnaires via the postal option to remain inclusive and give all Tenants of all different backgrounds and ages the opportunity to response and have their say. This new methodology process has helped keep costs the same as costs for the Landlord Survey have gone up due to it becoming an annual Statutory requirement.</p> | |
| 4. | Update on the Tenant and Leaseholder Engagement Review Action Plan and draft Comms Plan | |
| | ZKM provided the Panel with two handouts. One the Action Plan and the second a draft Comms Plan | |

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| | <p>devised as a result of the outcomes taken from the Action Plan.</p> <p>ZKM has advised he is working through the Action Plan, unfortunately, due to priority work commitments, this is something that is scheduled in-between projects. ZKM has mentioned that he is very mindful that this project needs to be completed. ZKM explained the action plan has been divided into four sections:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Communication Plan 2. Recruitment 3. Increase Awareness of the Engagement Service 4. Work with internal departments and external partners again to spread awareness of the Engagement Service. <p>One of the handouts ZKM provided the Panel with was a first draft of the Comms Plan which will tackle how the Housing Service will work with the Council's Comms Team to tackle issues like running campaigns to promote awareness of the Engagement Service, update web pages on the Council's Web site, use the Portal more effectively when delivery vital messages, review social media tools, and wish to introduce a separate independent Scrutiny Panel, Whatsapp groups for the purpose of quick and easy information sharing and engaging, etc.</p> | |
| 5. | Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy | |
| | WM provided the Panel with a verbal update on this | |

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| | <p>Strategy. The Strategy has been approved by Cabinet and became effective on the 1 April 2025.</p> <p>The Panel have asked whether they can receive a copy of the Strategy.</p> | WM |
| 6. | Housing Performance Indicators | |
| | <p>The Panel were handed performance information for both HTS and Harlow Council. ZKM identified a concern with HTS regarding their Satisfaction Surveys, as HTS advised that these surveys were now 100% online. ZKM advised that as a result this may not be considered to be totally inclusive as there was no postal option, which may be seen to be restricting feedback from several vulnerable groups. DH has been advised to investigate this and report back to the next Joint Panel.</p> <p>WM went through Harlow Council's performance and answered any questions raised at the meeting.</p> | DH |
| 7. | Current Consultation - None | |
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| 8. | Any Other Business | |
| | <p>JS advised ZKM of a couple of AOB in advance of the meeting which was then sent to HTS to respond at the meeting.</p> <p>JS advised that she understood that the HTS Call</p> | |

Centre was being moved to the Civic Centre. JS wanted to know when this was happening, what the reasons were for the move, and how this would benefit customers and the service moving forward. DH advised that this had only recently been communicated to HTS staff, and no timescales had been given yet, but that the intention was to move the call centre into the civic to help improve performance, provide better services for Tenants and better efficiency.

JS also asked about HTS's new integrated IT System which will be shared by both the Council and HTS, she would like to know, when this system will go live, what are the benefits of the new system and how will it improve services moving forward. While no implementation date was available, DH advised that the aim of the new system was to give the Council and HTS greater transparency.

Date of next Meeting – 18 June 2025.