

Property and Tenancy Standards Panel

Wednesday 7th January 2026

14:00 – 15:30pm Latton Bush Centre

ATTENDEES:

Tenants:

Selina Ellis (SE), Jane Steer (JS), Lucy Cooper (LC), Frank Feldman (FF), Mwiche Silwamba (MS)

Harlow Council:

Zulti Kiani-Mackintosh (ZKM), Nathan Kitteridge (NK), Kelly Rees (KR), Emmanuel Northey (EN), Kristina Akgul (KA)

HTS:

Debbie Hardy (DH), Gina Patten (GP).

Meeting minutes:

JS expressed concern regarding the tenant audit letters distributed to tenants. JS advised that each letter should include the tenant's name and provide clearer guidance on what to do if the tenant is unavailable at the time of the audit and contact details for rescheduling.

KR advised that what to do is in the letter there is 2 contact chooses provided. Also, names are not put on the letters due to the volume of letters being sent and the resourcing this would require.

JS added that this wasn't clear enough.

No action required.

Agenda review:

1. Welcome and Apologies

Apologies from Wayne Mitchell, Councillor David Carter, Hugh Hoad.

2. Minutes from previous meeting and matters arising

Previous Meeting Review:

2. JS requested an update on the installation of smoke alarm, as discussed at the previous panel meeting (replacement of battery-operated smoke alarms).

NK advised that the installation is scheduled to be completed by the end of the financial year.

12 Tower Blocks – 518 Dwellings

It was noted that the schedule listed 10–11 Netteswellbury Farm as having communal heating, although these are individual properties and therefore would not normally have communal heating. JS clarified that there are two separate boiler rooms with the boilers, one boiler allocated in the laundry room remoting for the property 10-11 and other side is for the properties 12 to 14.

EN advised that the original enquiry needs to be reviewed and investigated.

5. Housing performance KPI

LC requested an update regarding her friend, who is disabled and had experienced leak issues. LC expressed disappointment with the length of time taken to resolve the matter, noting that the tenant had to pull the carpet himself and was not offered a dehumidifier.

DH advised that a dehumidifier had been offered, with the cost of electricity to be covered. DH also confirmed that temporary accommodation had been offered to the tenant.

JS raised that the issue is still there with the water next to common room at Netteswellbury Farm and outside the carpark after rain it makes big poodle and this needs to be reviewed, not sure if this is the drainage issue.

NK will refer issue to HOPs again.

8. Any Other Business

JS requested feedback regarding the issues with the communal gardens at Freshwaters. NK explained that access between the gardens had been removed as this was agreed between the tenants at the time. There is not a right to cross each other gardens. Therefore, the gates were not installed. The private gardens were sorted before the decommissioning of the scheme.

JS expressed concern that the removal of garden / gates access could place disabled residents at risk in the event of an emergency.

NK added that in emergency the tenant has access to the garden.

No further action is required regarding the gates.

3. Update on the Landlord Survey – Tenant Satisfaction Measures for 2024-25 (Verbal Update)

ZKM provided the Panel with a verbal update. BMG have completed stage one of this project which included sending out online questionnaires to just over 5,000 Tenants, 577 replies have been received in total. Stage two of the project has begun, which includes sending out 2,000 questionnaires to Tenants via the post. Will keep the Panel updated.

4. Update on the Review of the Tenant and Leasehold Engagement and Involvement Services (Verbal Update)

ZKM explained that, as part of the transformation journey outlined in the Commission Statement, a decision was made to review all engagement services. This will be an independent review, supported by an external consultancy.

The review will include workshops with officers and tenant leaseholders. In addition, a landlord survey was issued by email to approximately 5,000 individuals, and a further 1,900 emails were sent to leaseholders. In total, around 600 responses were received.

Nick is leading the review and is currently analysing all responses. Feedback will be shared once this analysis is complete. There are plans to organise two workshops to provide further information. We are currently awaiting a response from Nick.

Once the review is completed, the final report will be produced before the end of the financial year.

JS asked whether tenants would be able to attend the workshops?

ZKM explained that tenant leaseholders will attend the workshop to meet face to face and capture feedback directly. This provides an additional method for gathering feedback and is an approach that has not been used previously.

The response rate was particularly strong, with 75% of responses from tenants and 25% from leaseholders, which is significantly higher than response levels from previous feedback exercises.

JS asked what had changed?

ZKM advised that previous landlord surveys had been less effective, where the current online survey approach has improved engagement. The platform will be used more frequently, as residents prefer communication via email.

JS expressed concerns about how individuals who do not use email, or are unable to access email, can provide feedback.

ZKM explained that the traditional method of sending letters by post is still in use to ensure these individuals can participate.

ZKM to keep the Panel updated.

5. Update on Housing Management Action Plan 2025/26 – 2027/28

ZKM reminded all that an action plan has been developed, incorporating changes, and that work has already commenced.

NK explained that, with the support of the report, progress against the agreed goals continues to be reviewed. Some actions have been completed, while others remain in progress. An example of completions is the new estate inspection mobile application (Photobook by Housemark) which allows inspections to be completed digitally on a mobile device. It can send off actions to the relevant departments, for example repairs direct to HTS and then all related information will be logged and stored as PDF documents. These will be then uploaded onto the website 28 days after inspections

JS asked how residents without internet access would be informed when inspections are taking place.

NK advised that information would be published in the *Harlow Times* and could also be printed and posted to tenants upon request to contact harlow.

JS expressed satisfaction with the process and complimented NK on the work being done.

NK also gave the example of the tenancy sign up pack being reviewed

MS asked whether tenancy sign-up is completed using paper copies still as she received an overwhelming amount of paperwork when she signed up as a tenant.

NK confirmed that tenancy agreements must be signed in paper form, as they are prepared for individual properties and include specific tenant information, such as the location of gas and electricity meters and details of any furniture provided. NK advised that as part of the review we are looking for what can be provided digitally or at a later date for example at the New Tenant Visit after 28 days.

MS explained that she had received her agreement in paper form but had since misplaced it. She asked whether the information was available on the platform or could be emailed, possibly via a QR code, to make access easier.

NK explained that the 28-day visit allows tenants time to settle, during which the Housing Officer can provide supporting information in person. MS suggested that QR codes linking to support information could be included in emails to improve accessibility for tenants. NK advised that this suggestion is something that is being considered as part of the review.

6. Estate Walkabouts

ZKM explained the process followed when Housing Officers carry out estate walkabouts, including how issues are identified, jobs are actioned, and notes are recorded by the officer.

NK added that during walkabouts with the new system, if a repair is identified, a photograph is taken and sent directly to HTS to log the issue immediately, rather than recording it on paper. There is also a process in place for the inspection report to be uploaded to the website.

JS suggested that residents be informed by email when a report will be available or notified once it has been published on the website.

LC asked how frequently these inspections and reports take place.

NK advised that the outcome of reported issues (the inspection report) would be communicated to residents by email, and that letters could be sent to tenants on a request. NK advised these inspections are once a year per estate.

7. Housing performance KPI's

DH presented the figures shown in the graphs relating to repairs, investigations, complaints, and councillor enquiries.

KR reviewed the KPIs, highlighting targets that had been achieved or exceeded.

Garage arrears have also reduced. KR explained that the use of direct debit impacts the KPI figures, meaning they may not always reflect results accurately.

KR also confirmed that processes are in place to support the achievement of targets.

JS congratulated KR on the results, noting that they were among the best she had seen.

NK presented the VOID figures and explained that an increase in turnaround times has led to lower performance figures but there had been a significant decrease in the amount of voids held which is positive news. NK advised that the new process implemented in September 2025 appears to be producing good

results. He expressed confidence that performance will continue to improve.

Further work is underway to refine this process.

LC raised a concern that after being offered a VOID property and being told they would receive a response within a couple of days, they followed up for two weeks without receiving an answer.

NK explained that VOID processes can sometimes take longer due to the work required on properties.

LC asked who would be responsible for repairing a leaking radiator, particularly during the period from October to March.

NK confirmed that this is covered under the repairs policy.

ACTION: ZKM to congratulate the rent team on achieving the highest results in recovering housing and garage arrears payments.

8. Current Consultation – None

9. Any Other Business

ZKM Building Harlow Future - Transformation of housing services that we are shaping itself with a new approach of quality, accountability and the outcome, is the main aim is to put right the things that are mater to tenant and improve their home. This strategy will set out how we manage their homes that is safe affordable and all assets are maintained and improved in the long run for the benefit of council and tenant. Was asked to bring to the panel and the response need to be received by 21st of January.

ACTION for tenants to respond to Building Harlow Future by 21st January.

No other comments or requests

Meetings closed

