

Property and Tenancy Standards Panel
Thursday 18th June 2026
Civic Centre

ATTENDEES:

Tenants-

Frank Feldman (FF), Elsie Sinclair (ES), Fred Sinclair (FS), Moochai Mwiche (MM), Janet Bullerwell (JB).

Harlow Council –

Zulfi Kiani-Mackintosh (ZKM), Wayne Mitchell (WM), Nathan Kitteridge (NK), Dawn Branch (DB), Jane Steadman (JS), Alyshia Watson (AW), Patsy Kehoe (Minute Taker).

HTS-

Debbie Hardy (DH).

1.	Welcome and Apologies	
	Sarah Jones – Executive Director	
2.	Minutes from previous meeting & matters arising	
	Minutes of previous meeting were agreed. Action Point Page 5 – Completed Page 9 – noted action point for Shakeel Khan (SK) relating to use of traffic cones to clear way for street sweeper, but no update available. Response to be provided for next meeting.	
3.	Consultation on the Draft Repair Policy	
	AW introduced the Draft Repairs Policy and assistance from ZKM. Explained that the consultation is a first of its kind for Harlow, as the Council have used a wider engagement approach, Policy has gone out to 7,000 tenant email addresses and 1,500 Leaseholder emails. To date, just under 250 responses received. In summary, responses had been mainly positive.	

	ES asked if everyone has the survey? ZKM confirmed it has currently gone out online; the next stage is to send it out to all tenants and leaseholders via their rent and service charge statements. AW mentioned once the consultation was complete, and results are analysed, they will be presented to the Housing Standards Panels. FF mentioned vulnerability & fencing, is it in the pack? ZKM replied yes.	
4.	Update on the Landlord Survey – Tenant Satisfaction Measures for 2025-26 (Verbal Update)	
	ZKM provided an update to the Panel in relation to the results of the most recent Landlord Survey. ZKM referred to the previous Panel meeting in March, where he had advised that the annual survey had been completed. ZKM explained that the survey asked tenants questions in line with the requirements of the Regulator of Social Housing's Tenant Satisfaction Measures, which were required to be collected and published annually. In addition, the survey also asked additional questions in relation to service delivery, to seek to gain tenant perception on the way the council was delivering services. ZKM explained that while there was a statutory requirement to obtain the information, the feedback was also vital in assisting the council in improving service delivery and ensuring services were tailored around the needs of local people. ZKM provided the Panel with a handout detailing the councils Tenant Satisfaction Measure results for the last three years. ZKM explained that the councils methods for conducting the survey had changed in the 3 years, with the survey in 2023/24 heavily relying on postal responses. This had resulted in 636 completed surveys, 535 of which had been received by post, with 101 provided online, from a total of 4,000 surveys sent out. For the 2024/25 survey, the council had worked with a consultant, BMG, to conduct the survey, which was required to be conducted independently. Following a significant increase in the cost of conducting the survey by post, a new methodology was introduced,	

	with an online e-mail option provided alongside the postal option. ZKM explained that BMG had advised, based on their experience, that changing methodology could initially have an impact on the results of the survey. In 2024/25, a total of 4,500 surveys had been sent using the online email option, with 2,000 sent by post. In response 766 replies were received, (407 online/ 191 by SMS, and 168 postal. It was noted however that the results showed a significant reduction in satisfaction levels, compared to the previous year, as evidenced by the handout provided. This was in line with the expectations given by BMG regarding the change in methodology, as well as other contributing factors. ZKM noted that during this period the council had commenced a new transformation journey, as part of Building Harlow's Future, with specific missions to Invest in our Housing and a renewed commitment to improve services for residents. This included a review of the Tenant and Leaseholder Engagement Service (as below), to ensure improvement in the way that the Housing Service and the Council communicated with, and provided services to, our Tenants, Leaseholders and Residents. While this work is ongoing, the results of the 2025/26 Landlord Survey showed significant improvements in tenants satisfaction across a number of the Tenant Satisfaction Measures when compared to the previous year. In 2025/26, a total of 4,300 surveys were sent online via email and 2,000 via postal. In total, we received 1,200 responses, 842 online/email and 358 postal representing a significant increase in responses. ZKM explained that the results were significant, as the methodology used for this year had been the same as 2024/25 so was a fairer comparison. Additionally, the demographic of those tenants responding was considered to show a truer representation of our tenants. ZKM noted that the results were a positive good news story, showing improved satisfaction, and had given the Housing service even more drive to continue to do better and provide better outcomes for our tenants and leaseholders.	
5.	Update on the Review of the Tenant and Leaseholder Engagement and Involvement Service (Verbal Update)	

	Update on the Ark Review ZKM thanked all representatives who had participated in the review of the councils Tenant and Leaseholder Engagement service, which had been carried out by ARK, which had provided an invaluable insight. ZKM advised that the findings and actions from the review had been reflected in the Tenant & Leaseholder Engagement Strategy, which was approved by Cabinet in June. ZKM explained that the strategy was intended to drive a transformation in how the Council, its tenants, and its leaseholders worked in partnership to co-create policies, improve services, and drive sustainable and meaningful change for current and future residents. ZKM also advised that the strategy aimed to ensure that every tenant and leaseholder regardless of background, ability, or circumstance had a fair opportunity to be heard and to see that their views have an impact.	
6.	Asset Management Strategy (Verbal Update)	
	Update on the Asset Management Strategy ZKM provided a verbal update on the council's Asset Management Strategy, advising that the Strategy and Action Plan would be going to Cabinet for approval in July. ZKM explained that, in line with the "Invest in our Housing" Building Harlow's Future mission, the Housing Asset Management Strategy and Plan set out how the council would manage investment in its housing over the next five years to ensure that tenants have safe, affordable, and sustainable homes that they love living in. It would also set out how the council engages with tenants on their priorities when planning investment, and the Strategy itself would only be approved by Cabinet subject to tenant and leaseholder engagement, and further consultation would therefore be taking place.	

7.	Update on the Supported Housing Standards Panel Meeting	
	ZKM referred to the minutes of the Supported Housing Standards Panel from 19 May 2026, and the Annual Telecare report, which were provided. ZKM explained the role of the Supported Housing Panel, and how this linked into the engagement model. ES asked if everyone on the scheme is sent a letter inviting them to go the meeting. ZKM mentioned each scheme nominated two representatives to attend the panel.	
8.	Housing Performance KPI's	
	DH went through the performance information provided, Page 2 – noticeable highlights target of 3.5 hrs, now 2.45 hrs for fly tips – Excellent performance for gas compliance – 100% maintained, attending to make safe withing 2 hours 99%. Under performance KBT Keep Britain Tidy – just below the higher quartile. Recreation/Industrial HTS are focusing on these areas to reduce litter Focus on areas non-dangerous trees 94.12% slightly below target but improvement on last quartile. In process, getting new routine in place. Customer Service Report – May -73 complaints, 39 not upheld, leaving 34 upheld 4,076 repairs equated to of all complaints 0.74%. Partially upheld – 13 complaints. Graphs Page 30 complaints for delay time scales not met. Partially or upheld complaints, escalation to stage 2=14, 8 were for response repairs and 5 for parks & landscapes. Complaint within target 99%, 1% down from previous month. Plaudits down for the month. member enquires 3 out of target for the month.	

	Health & Safety – AIIR rate increased to 730 for January 2026 following a reportable incident RIDDOR Incidents 1 Accident since April 2025 26 Near Misses since April 2025 42 Right First Time – February 4192 repairs, 100% satisfied March moved over new repairs system, had glitches on report side but working through them. Page 3 – overall satisfaction. Any question let ZKM know. ES referred to issues with council footpaths being closed in The Downs & The Dashes, meaning residents had to walk into the road. DH explained that 90% of footpaths were the responsibility of Essex County Council, rather than Harlow Council. Suggested if information was provided to ZKM, DH could find out who the roads in question belonged to. AW asked if survey at the back was based on 10 people? (page 5). DH stated it had become untenable sending surveys, so had started making calls. Got new MRI system running, 1,400 responses. Residents get text message to fill out for HTS. Cannot validate date, getting good engagement back. FF asked whether footpaths were responsibility of Essex County Council or Harlow Council?? DH advised that approximately 80% of footpaths were owned by Essex County Council & 20% were Harlow Council. <u>Performance Indicators – Harlow Council</u> <u>Income Recovery</u> WM referred to end of year performance figures. In relation to overall percentage of rent collected, noted that the collection rate for the year was 98.35%, against target of 98.5%.	
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WM noted that this target had been set based on the previous years performance. While target not met, noted that this would have exceeded the target set in previous years.

Former Tenant Arrears

WM advised that the end of year performance had been significantly above the target figure, which was disappointing, and that improvement was required in this area. Explained that current arrears were priority, and that there had been staffing issues within the rents team which had impacted on capacity.

Garage Arrears

WM advised that garage arrears were heavily linked to the respective payment dates for Direct Debit/Standing Orders, due to the large number of tenants using these methods. This meant that for reporting periods where these payments were not received, arrears were always higher. Performance was being audited moving forward to seek to improve performance.

Temporary Accommodation Arrears

WM noted that at the end of December 2025, these arrears had amounted to £45,000, against a target of £70,000 so had been significantly below target.

In January 2026, WM advised that there had been a huge leap in arrears in January, due mainly to a number of accounts having been set up incorrectly resulting in backdated arrears accruing. While the arrears figure had reduced by £20,000 since then, due to work being undertaken across teams, arrears remained significantly above target, although work was continuing to address this.

Voids

NK – Re-let time remains higher than target however given the significant change to the voids process we are in a good position in relation to the improvement plan. At the peak we were working with 180 voids however this was 139 in March and these figures were affected by the handover of multiple newbuild properties at the time the figure was calculate so could have been even lower. Average re-let time is 77 days however it is not a true reflection as those properties caught up in the old process void for a longer period of time pulls the average up. Figure expected to remain high into quarter two of this

	year at least. Rent loss improved throughout the year as the number of voids held decreased. Garage voids – dramatically below target due to a number unlettable and undesirable garages being demolished in 25/26 through the Open Parking Programme.	
9.	Garage Policy Update NK – Reviewing Housing Management Policy & developing a strategy to provide develop a long term management strategy for our garages. Due to their age the stock is starting to deteriorate more quickly, we have parking difficulties across our estates and the garages are not of an adequate size to house the vehicles. There is a 2 year process with year one involving a review of all of the stock and then in year two a future strategy for all garage blocks will be created based on a variety of factors including items such as demand and condition. Comments to be forwarded to ZKM. ES asked if you get rid of 4 garages, would it make room for 5 cars? NK replied current guidance for a parking space is 2.9 metres for a car which even with the walls removed from the garages you cannot achieve so four demolished garages can only provide four parking spaces. MM mentioned areas in Peterswood, interested to see if you will look at these. NK – these are below a block of flats so cannot be changed. Can only be refurbished. ES asked if the garage is knocked down, can the tenant still park there, will they have to pay? NK mentioned one option in the strategy is that garages can be turned into rentable handstandings so in that case yes they will be able to. ES mentioned they had done a lot of parking in Arkwrights. NK advised this was part of the Open Parking Programme so it is free for parking, not part of this process. ES noted there are more cars now then when they were built. NK advised to look at Policy and Strategy as it shows how we are going to try and address some of this through proper management of the vast garage stock but noted there would need to be further investment in another Open Parking Programme if the issue were to be fully addressed.	

	JB advised that near where she lives in Waterhouse Moor/Tendering Road, Church Leys, end of her garden garages half demolished, very confusing if garages in her area were being sold? NK advised that one site in Church Leys has been sold and refurbishment commenced. A further site in Waterhouse Moor was going to be sold however Council decided that would be better for residents to create some additional open parking so sale was abandoned and we removed 50% of garages so there was still garages left for those already renting but also some parking provided in this congested area. WM noted it depends on the need for that area is. 10. “What would you like to see added to Panel Agenda for forthcoming meetings” ZKM explained that this was a new item added, as the council was keen to empower tenants and leaseholders to set the agenda for meetings moving forward, and asked if there were any topics that they would like to see covered at future meetings. ZKM reminded that any topics had to cover issues that affected tenants as a whole, and not individual issues. ES asked when the town will be more accessible, when will there be a new hospital and why have Marks & Spencer been given a new site when there are existing sites within the town, like the old Mothercare site? WM advised that this is a Housing meeting and the Panel had no influence over these issues. MM asked about the council's tenancy audit programme, and how did tenants know what actions had taken place following these? WM advised that the tenancy audit programme had been a major commitment under Building Harlow's Future over the past year, with nearly 5,500 tenancy audits completed in this time. This was vital in assisting the council in understanding who its tenants are, their needs, including any support required, and also assisting in identifying any issues relating to the property. WM advised that the audits had been extremely valuable in identifying	
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	some serious issues, including safeguarding issues, urgent unreported repairs, cases of “cuckooing” – where tenants were targeted by criminals who took over their homes -, and previously unreported support needs. WM advised that while issues identified during the audits were reported via the appropriate channels, the council was looking at ways of improving its processes to better capture and report the issues identified and actions taken, so that this could be fed back, with the aim of improving the service provided to tenants. MM asked how the tenants would see this, and whether the programme would continue, and highlighted need to avoid this being seen as a “tick box” exercise? WM advised that the council appreciated the importance of keeping tenants updated on the actions taken as a result of the audit programme, and that this was something that was being looked at to improve going forward. The tenancy audit programme would continue, and the council would be looking at how to capture the outcomes of the audit to allow meaningful feedback to be provided. JB asked whether there was anyway that the council could provide a report regarding the issues, detailing the number of tenants that had been assisted? WM advised that this was something that had not been able to be provided yet, due to the information gathering required, the number of audits carried out, and the way these had been recorded, but was definitely the aim moving forward. MM suggested that it would be helpful to show this information in graphs, as with other information provided. DB advised that, when carrying out the tenancy audits, where there were any issues identified, either personal or related to the property, the tenant was made aware, and a reference number was given for repairs/ referral for tenancy support etc which captured the follow on work. ES advised that if tenants phone up, the council are very good, and tenants are listened to but when they visit they do not always wear name badges. WM advised that all officers should wear name badges and that	
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	tenants should not allow officers in without these. WM explained that the Housing Service was looking at ways to increase visibility and engagement, assisting with tenants knowing who their housing officers were, and advised that officers were attending the Community Hub in the town centre along with other agencies, as well as the Stow Hub, and that Housing Officers would also be attending events at paddling pools during the summer. MM mentioned the council's reputation, and that while Housing were doing lots of work, it was important that it let people know this. WM advised that Housing needed to use every opportunity to engage with tenants, communicate what we do and seek feedback on this, and this was something that was being worked on. ES asked about obtaining door chains. NK advised this was not standard but that sometimes these would be provided following referrals from the police. WM advised that, where required, Housing Officers had the facility to obtain ring doorbells for tenants, and could assist with other safety precautions. ZK advised any suggestions be brought to the next meeting.	
11.	Market Engagement Event ZKM advised that Housing Property Services were planning to hold a "Market Engagement Day" event to invite all contractors they are working with to attend. It is due to take place on 7th July 2026 in the council chamber from 9am till 1pm. The Council thought it would be good if a couple of tenant and leaseholder reps attended this. ZKM advised that transport can be arranged if needed and confirmed that refreshments will be provided. JB advised that she would like to attend.	

12.	Current Consultation No external.	
13.	Any Other Business No Date of Next Meeting: Thursday 17 September 2026 Location: Committee Rm 1, First Floor, Civic Centre Time: 2 pm	