

Agenda

Housing and Homelessness Panel (Panel of the Scrutiny Committee)

This meeting will be held on:

Date: **Wednesday 6 October 2021**

Time: **6.00 pm**

Place: **Remote (Zoom)**

For further information please contact:

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- may register in advance to speak to the committee in accordance with the [committee's rules](#)
- may record all or part of the meeting in accordance with the Council's [protocol](#)

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Committee Membership

Councillors: Membership 6: Quorum 3: substitutes are not permitted.

Councillor Linda Smith (Chair)

Councillor Nadine Bely-Summers

Councillor Lizzy Diggins

Councillor Laurence Fouweather

Councillor Chris Jarvis

Councillor Elizabeth Wade

Apologies and notification of substitutes received before the publication are shown under *Apologies for absence* in the agenda. Those sent after publication will be reported at the meeting. Substitutes for the Chair and Vice-chair do not take on these roles.

Agenda

	Pages
1 Apologies Substitutes are not allowed.	
2 Declarations of interest	
3 Housing Panel Work Plan Attached is a proposed work plan of topics for consideration for the Panel's forthcoming meetings. The Panel is asked to AGREE the proposed work plan	7 - 8
4 Notes of previous meeting The Panel is asked to AGREE the notes of the meeting held on 02 September 2021 as an accurate record, having raised any necessary amendments.	9 - 14
5 Landlord Services Performance Dashboard The requested dashboard of landlord services is delayed as a consequence of the QL implementation. It is anticipated to be available for the Panel's November meeting.	
6 Social Housing White Paper Part 2 of the Panel's ongoing consideration of the theme of tenant engagement and empowerment focuses on the proposed changes in central government's white paper on Social Housing. A presentation will be given by Bill Graves, Landlord Services Manager. Also invited to this meeting to contribute are Councillor Diko Blackings, Cabinet Member for Affordable Housing, Housing Security and Housing the Homeless, Councillor Mike Rowley, Cabinet Member for Citizen Focused Services, Stephen Clarke, Head of Housing, Simon Warde, Tenant Involvement Manager, Wendy Hind, Tenant Involvement Officer and the tenant ambassadors. Stephen Gabriel, newly appointed Executive Director of Communities and People will be attending to watch. It is expected that the findings will be written up at the end of the year,	15 - 40

including any recommendations. The Panel is asked therefore to **NOTE** the report and **AGREE** any recommendations it wishes to make. Should it wish to make an urgent recommendation to Cabinet, ie prior to the report being written at the end of the year, it is also at liberty to do so. A list of the issues raised previously by the Panel for possible consideration as recommendations is included within the notes of the previous meeting for the relevant item.

7 Housing and Carbon Reduction

The Scrutiny Committee agreed earlier in the year the topics it wished to commission reports on. One of these reports was on the relationship between the Council's Housing function and Carbon Reduction. Malcolm Peek, Property Services Manager, will be presenting this report.

Also invited to this meeting to contribute are Councillor Diko Blackings, Cabinet Member for Affordable Housing, Housing Security and Housing the Homeless, Councillor Mike Rowley, Cabinet Member for Citizen Focused Services, Stephen Clarke, Head of Housing. Stephen Gabriel, newly appointed Executive Director of Communities and People will be attending to watch.

The Panel is asked to consider the report, and **NOTE** it, having **AGREED** any necessary recommendations to Cabinet arising from it.

****NB This report is to follow and will be issued as a supplement.****

8 Dates of next meetings

Meetings of the Housing and Homelessness Panel are scheduled for:

04 November 2021

02 February 2022

04 April 2022

The Panel should also be aware that it is likely to be invited to participate in the Housing element of the Budget Review Group. The exact date on which this will happen has not been set, but Panel members are asked to note that the likely dates are either 06 or 10 January 2022.

Information for those attending

Recording and reporting on meetings held in public

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- To follow the protocol which can be found on the Council's [website](#)
- Not to disturb or disrupt the meeting
- Not to edit the recording in a way that could lead to misinterpretation of the proceedings. This includes not editing an image or views expressed in a way that may ridicule or show a lack of respect towards those being recorded.
- To avoid recording members of the public present, even inadvertently, unless they are addressing the meeting.

Please be aware that you may be recorded during your speech and any follow-up. If you are attending please be aware that recording may take place and that you may be inadvertently included in these.

The Chair of the meeting has absolute discretion to suspend or terminate any activities that in his or her opinion are disruptive.

Councillors declaring interests

General duty

You must declare any disclosable pecuniary interests when the meeting reaches the item on the agenda headed "Declarations of Interest" or as soon as it becomes apparent to you.

What is a disclosable pecuniary interest?

Disclosable pecuniary interests relate to your* employment; sponsorship (ie payment for expenses incurred by you in carrying out your duties as a councillor or towards your election expenses); contracts; land in the Council's area; licenses for land in the Council's area; corporate tenancies; and securities. These declarations must be recorded in each councillor's Register of Interests which is publicly available on the Council's website.

Declaring an interest

Where any matter disclosed in your Register of Interests is being considered at a meeting, you must declare that you have an interest. You should also disclose the nature as well as the existence of the interest. If you have a disclosable pecuniary interest, after having declared it at the meeting you must not participate in discussion or voting on the item and must withdraw from the meeting whilst the matter is discussed.

Members' Code of Conduct and public perception

Even if you do not have a disclosable pecuniary interest in a matter, the Members' Code of Conduct says that a member "must serve only the public interest and must never improperly confer an advantage or disadvantage on any person including yourself" and that "you must not place yourself in situations where your honesty and integrity may be questioned". The matter of interests must be viewed within the context of the Code as a whole and regard should continue to be paid to the perception of the public.

*Disclosable pecuniary interests that must be declared are not only those of the member her or himself but also those member's spouse, civil partner or person they are living with as husband or wife or as if they were civil partners.

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Housing and Homelessness Panel Work Plan

NB This work plan is provisional and is subject to change, usually relating to changes on the Cabinet Forward Plan. Changes made outside meetings are agreed between the Scrutiny Officer and the Chair.

Cabinet items beyond two months in advance are not included on the work plan owing to the greater potential they will move or alternative items of higher priority arise in the meantime.

04 November 2021 - reports

Agenda item	Cabinet item	Description	Cabinet portfolio	Lead officer
Discretionary Housing Payment Policy	Yes	A report to review the operation of the Discretionary Housing Payment policy, and to amend the policy, if required.	Cabinet Member for Inclusive Communities	James Pickering, Welfare Reform Manager
Tenant Involvement 3: Results from the Tenant Satisfaction Survey	No	A report to precis the key feedback arising from the recent Tenant Satisfaction survey	Cabinet Member for Affordable Housing, Housing Security and Housing the Homeless	Stephen Clarke, Head of Housing
Empty Homes	No	A review of empty homes in the city: the scale of the problem, why it is a problem, what the powers the Council has are, and how much it is using them.	Cabinet Member for Affordable Housing, Housing Security and Housing the Homeless	Melanie Mutch, Empty Homes Officer

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Minutes of a meeting of the Housing and Homelessness Panel (Panel of the Scrutiny Committee) on Thursday 2 September 2021



Committee members present:

Councillor Bely-Summers	Councillor Diggins
Councillor Fouweather	Councillor Jarvis
Councillor Linda Smith (Chair)	Councillor Wade

Officers present for all or part of the meeting:

Stephen Clarke, Head of Housing Services
Richard Wood, Strategy and Service Development Manager
Simon Warde, Tenant Involvement Manager
Tom Hudson, Scrutiny Officer

Also present:

Councillor Diko Blackings, Cabinet Member for Affordable Housing, Housing Security, and Housing the Homeless
Councillor Mike Rowley, Cabinet Member for Citizen Focused Services
Tony Buchanan, Tenant Ambassador
Anthony Church, Tenant Ambassador
Geno Humphry, Tenant Ambassador
Olga Siddon, Tenant Ambassador
David Simons, Tenant Ambassador
Brenda Walton, Tenant Ambassador

1. Apologies

Councillor Blackings had sent an e mail warning that she would be delayed in arriving. This was **NOTED** by the Panel. There were no other apologies.

2. Declarations of interest

None

3. Housing Panel Work Plan

Councillor Diko Blackings joined the meeting at the commencement of this item.

It was proposed by the Chair that the Panel consider the Cabinet paper on Small Sites Development Proposals at the November meeting, which was accepted by the Panel.

There was a request for more information regarding the progress of Selective Licensing, which the Scrutiny Officer agreed to follow up on.

Stephen Clarke, Head of Housing, requested that the reports on the Tenant Satisfaction Survey in October and the Housing White Paper in November be switched around, which was accepted.

A presentation by the Empty Homes Officer on their work was also requested, with the Scrutiny Officer to organise a suitable date. This suggestion was accepted.

The Chair also brought to the Panel's attention that Council had referred work to the Panel around DSS discrimination in lettings. It was agreed that the Scrutiny Officer would pass on to Housing the actions required by the motion which referred the work to the Panel, and would ask for an update report on progress in April 2022.

The work plan was **AGREED** by the Panel subject to the above changes.

It was also **AGREED** that the Chair would work with the Head of Housing to develop a performance dashboard, which would be considered as a standing item at each meeting.

4. Notes of previous meeting

The notes of the meeting held on 04 March 2021 were **AGREED** as an accurate record.

5. Housing Performance Q1

Richard Wood, Strategy and Service Development Manager, presented a Housing Performance update report to the Panel, taking in the activity of the Housing service area, but also Housing-related service areas.

For the Council's activities around rough sleeping and homelessness the challenging situation of undertaking its work in a new way, through the pandemic and the 'everyone in' policy was noted. Housing's current focus was on getting those people who had been taken off the streets moved on into longer-term accommodation. The pandemic had brought increased presentations of people as homeless, but with changes such as the end of the eviction ban, the furlough scheme and the recommencement of evictions that number was liable to remain elevated. Despite the challenges, however, securing accommodation was proving successful, with 252 having been moved on to date. Since the publication of the report Canterbury House had been vacated, and attention was being turned to those housed at the YHA. The Council's work was being supported by a successful bid for RSI funding from central government, which would partially be used for a social lettings pilot to trial enabling access to private lettings from former rough sleepers. Overall, number of rough sleepers was reducing, with 24 recorded at the last count in Q1, down from 62 in 19-20. Other KPIs about temporary accommodation and successful outcomes from homelessness prevention interventions were also being met.

Traditionally the Council's affordable housing targets were reported on annually. However, owing to the long term work needed to deliver housing developments it was deemed more appropriate to have a four year target instead to drive performance, set at 1200 affordable homes. In the first quarter 49 affordable homes had been delivered, compared to 123 in the entire year prior.

The main focus around the Council's own housing stock in terms of KPIs was over decarbonisation and retrofitting, with the aim that fewer than 46% of homes would be

rated below an EPC rating of C for 21-22. Compared to a baseline of 54%. This is being supported by financial investment from the council, alongside bidding for grant funding from central government, a successful bid for LAD1B fund means work can get underway on 240 properties with the worst performing properties being targeted first.

In response to the presentation the Panel raised a number of questions. Assurances on the steps being taken to ensure harder-to-house rough sleepers were sought as the 'everyone in' policy was starting to be wound down. This area was recognised by officers to be a challenge, but the ambition was to make every person leaving temporary accommodation at the YHA an offer of suitable accommodation, which would be supported by funding through both the Next Steps accommodation programme, and the Rough Sleeping accommodation programme. This funding could be used not only to provide accommodation itself, but support to the individuals in their accommodation. Floyds Row would also, once repurposed, be able to temporarily house and support a number of individuals.

Challenge was provided by one of the Panel's guests, Tony Buchanan, over the meaning of successful housing of homeless individuals as he had received reports from a number of individuals stating that their accommodation was not supporting their recovery. One of the discoveries of the 'everyone in' exercise was the size of the hidden homeless in Oxford, sofa surfing rather than being street homeless. Successful housing was determined by the security of that housing, suitable for their needs and affordable within benefit allowances. It was recognised, however, that getting people with lived experience to feed into Council services was extremely important, and that with the challenges of Covid this may have reduced relative to the engagement there had been before with the Lived Experience Advisory Forum.

Clarity was also sought over the meaning of successful outcomes relating to those owed a homeless prevention duty. Definitions in this area were determined by government and were not set by the Council but included at-risk individuals being allowed to stay in their current property for over six months, or rehousing at-risk individuals before they became homeless. Those who don't get a positive outcome and become homeless the council will continue to work with and support them under a homelessness relief duty. Other outcomes recorded include losing contact with households.

The Panel made enquiries over the Council's retrofitting plans, specifically over whether the improvements did indeed lead to lower bills, and the degree to which tenants were involved in decisions over which specific types of retrofit were undertaken, particularly in relation to ground-source heat pumps. In response, the focus of measurement around retrofitting was on EPCs, but improvements to EPC ratings would inevitably lead to reduced bills. The exact quantum of those reductions would not be known, however. For ground-source heat pumps, previous pilots had shown them to be relatively unsuccessful locally, although technology was always improving so requires continued monitoring and review. A wider point made clear by other authorities undertaking retrofitting projects on a wider scale had been how crucial involving tenants in discussions over changes to their homes was. Officer experience to date showed that time invested in understanding tenant needs paid dividends in terms of reduced disruption and higher satisfaction by the tenants. Despite a time pressure from central government, the Council had asked for an extension to ensure that tenants could be suitably consulted with.

Following questions around rent-arrears levels the Panel welcomed the news that the Council's earlier intervention process was working well and despite the pandemic levels of rent arrears were in line with pre-pandemic figures.

It was **AGREED** to make the following recommendation to Cabinet:

1) That the Council, as Covid restrictions ease, increases the breadth and depth of its engagement with the Lived Experience Advisory Forum and other similar groups in shaping Council homelessness services.

6. Introducing Tenant Engagement

Simon Warde, Tenant Involvement Manager, gave a presentation to introduce members of the Panel to the different fora and avenues through which the Council engages with its tenants and leaseholders. He was supported by representatives of these fora, the tenant ambassadors.

The Tenant Involvement Team is comprised of four permanent staff, and an apprentice to join imminently, funded from the Housing Revenue Account. It exists to ensure compliance with the Regulator's 'Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard' through tenant involvement in the development, monitoring and scrutiny of Council tenant and leaseholder services. In 2016 the team was awarded accreditation by the Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS) and was awarded Team of the Year. The accreditation which was re-awarded in 2020.

Alongside its more targeted engagement with the tenant ambassadors, the team provides a number of avenues for engaging with tenants more broadly: The Tenants In Touch magazine, facebook and tenant involvement web pages.

The Tenant Involvement team is not the sole source of tenant involvement, with consultation being undertaken centrally through the consultation team. The Tenancy Management and Communities Team also engage with tenants on a regular basis for consultations. It has been found that a mix of online and telephone yields the best balance between cost and accessibility. Postal surveys were no longer cost effective and therefore were used only on request, but door to door surveys could be, particularly in plugging gaps in responses via other methods.

Looking ahead, the Tenant Involvement team's work would primarily be focused on preparing for the upcoming Housing white paper, where within every strand there is a significant element pertaining to tenant involvement. Other key areas would be responding to the requirements of the Housing Ombudsman regarding complaints processes, and issues arising from the Building Safety Bill. Two other areas of focus were setting up in-depth assessors, whose job it will be to monitor satisfaction levels, and identify and solve areas of dissatisfaction, and to establish a Housing Development Working Group to involve tenants in the pre-planning stages of development sites and post-completion inspections to ensure they are of satisfactory standard.

In the future, it was hoped that tenants might also be able to become involved in performance monitoring around issues such as gas safety, void turnaround times, and incidences and themes around antisocial behaviour. Also, creating a Tenant and Leaseholder Board – a body attended by senior officers and fed into by tenant ambassadors – would create a direct communication link between tenants and senior decision-makers.

The Tenant Ambassadors presented their areas of involvement with the Council.

Brenda Walton and Geno Humphrey spoke about their involvement with contract tender evaluations. A number of ambassadors have been trained by the Council to look at new contracts, as well as renewal tenders. When tender documentation is received by the

Council it is passed on to participating tenant ambassadors, who score each one against the same matrix as Council officers. The only difference is that – at the request of the tenant ambassadors – the price is not included. Ambassadors are supported by council officers if they need help with clarification of technical issues. Having scored each tender individually, a joint meeting between ambassadors and council officers is held, where a consensus score is reached. The procurement team subsequently add in the effect of the different prices offered to determine the favoured contractor.

Anthony Church introduced his involvement with the Great Estates team. The level of involvement requires between two to four meetings per month with stakeholders of the Great Estates programme. The role of the ambassador is to identify areas suitable for makeovers, collecting resident views and ideas and ensuring they are put forward, and scoping proposals for upgrades. Stakeholder meetings, including ambassadors, are then held to agree priorities between different proposals.

David Simons talked about tenant involvement in interviews via stakeholder interviews. Tenant ambassadors are briefed beforehand, where the advert, job description and person specification are talked through, with the opportunity for clarification and model answers provided. During the interviews themselves, ambassadors are asked to score responses to the questions. These scores are fed back as part of the wider interview process. The involvement of the ambassadors does not stop at the point of interviews, however, but there is feedback on how a particular applicant was chosen, with full transparency over the scoring process given to ambassadors. The appointed candidate also gets to meet the ambassadors for a talk as part of their induction process.

Tony Buchanan spoke about the Housing Ombudsman Residents Panel. The role of tenants in the Housing Ombudsman Residents Panel is one which is determined in central government's Housing White Paper. This involves national level work, but also working with the Council to establish and maintain a complaints procedure in accordance with good practice recommended by the Housing Ombudsman, and is followed to the new regulatory requirements as set out in the new Complaints Handling Code.

Olga Siddon introduced the variety of issues she had been invited to participate in as a tenant, from Environmental Improvement, to the proposed Housing and Homelessness Strategy, to making a response to central government's green paper on Health and Disability. She stressed that she had become aware of it though information shared in the Tenants in Touch magazine, but her involvement had grown organically. The work of the Tenant Involvement team was lauded, and the benefits of being able to be involved highlighted.

Issues raised for discussion by the Panel included:

- The level of tenant involvement in choosing housing development partners. There had been some engagement between the Tenant Involvement team and Housing Development around five years previously to do surveys and inspections, but there had been little of that type of engagement since then.
- The mechanism by which it was decided which tenders would have tenant ambassador input. There was no formal policy; the value Tenant Involvement could add was becoming more recognised as it participated in more procurements but it was not a recognised step in the tendering process. Practically, it was not possible to support tenant engagement in all tender processes, but there was officer support for making the Tenant Involvement team aware of what was coming up in order to allow tenant ambassadors to choose which they wishes to become part of. One issue to be noted was the

proportion of development being run through OCHL, rather than directly through the Council itself.

- The challenges faced by older people in making their voices heard in an increasingly digital environment. Whilst it would be dealt with in greater detail at a future meeting, confidence was expressed that through using a number of consultation methods the Council had managed to capture in its annual tenant satisfaction survey a representative number of responses from older people.
- A request was made for a summary of the actions to be taken in light of the responses to the tenant satisfaction survey.
- The adequacy of tenant representation on the Council's Resident's Panel of hundreds of local residents. It was confirmed that there was tenant representation. However, GDPR restrictions on use and storage of data meant there was not the opportunity to build on that group outside of work already undertaken by the Resident's Panel.
- The number of people trained to be procurement ambassadors. Around 8 people have been trained in procurement, with more anticipated.
- It was noted that there was not a formal process for having tenant ambassador involvement in interviews, and that the new Executive Director of Housing and Communities had been appointed without tenant ambassador input.

Possible issues that were raised for future recommendations were as follows:

- Support for the development of the Housing Development Working Group, and within its scope include engagement with tenants on internal design ideas in addition to those mentioned
- That tenant involvement in procurement is formalised and made less ad hoc
- Having a specific older people's tenant ambassador to ensure the specific needs of this group were being met.
- Replicate the Residents Panel just for Council tenants or find a way to get permission to engage with the subset that are tenants. The former could possibly be done through the use of permissions gained from the tenant satisfaction survey. A total of 420 people did give permission to be contacted in future.
- That tenant ambassador involvement in appointments, particularly senior appointments, in Housing be formalised.

7. Dates of next meetings

The Panel **NOTED** the dates of future meetings and the Panel's continuance in a virtual format.

The meeting started at 6.00 pm and ended at 8.00 pm

Chair

Date: Wednesday 6 October 2021

Housing and Homelessness Panel
(Panel of the Scrutiny Committee)

15

Social Housing White Paper:
The Charter for Social Housing Residents

Bill Graves, Landlord Services Manager

06/10/2021

Agenda Item 6

Introduction

- Grenfell Tower tragedy led government to focus on tenants and safety
- Countrywide roadshows and wide consultations with tenants
- Social Housing Green Paper 2018
- Call for Evidence on how social housing is regulated
- ¹⁶ MHCLG published the Social Housing White Paper in November 2020, entitled The Charter for Social Housing Residents (The Charter)
- Linked to and heavily referencing Building Safety Bill and Fire Safety Bill
- Will be driven by legislation and regulation
- Clear expectation that landlords should not wait

Seven Themed Chapters

- To be safe in your home
- To know how your landlord is performing
- To have your complaints dealt with promptly and fairly
- To be treated with respect
- To have your voice heard by your landlord
- To have a good quality home and neighbourhood to live in
- To be supported to take your first step to ownership

Chapter 1: To be Safe in Your Home 1

- Building Safety Bill - enhanced regulatory regime for all buildings, including a more stringent regime for the design, construction, day-to-day management and maintenance of higher-risk buildings, with residents having a strong voice in the system.
- Fire Safety Consultation on Government proposals to implement the recommendations in the Grenfell Tower Inquiry's Phase 1 report
- Supported a Social Sector (Building Safety) Engagement Best Practice Group, bringing together social landlords and residents from across the country to test approaches to engagement on building safety.
- Published a Fire Safety Bill which will clarify the scope of the Fire Safety Order in its application to the structure, external walls and flat entrance doors in multi-occupied residential buildings.

Chapter 1: To be Safe in Your Home 2

- Strengthening the RSH's consumer regulation objectives to explicitly include safety.
- Requiring social landlords to identify a nominated person responsible for complying with their health and safety requirements.
- Regulator of Social Housing work with HSE to ensure effective sharing of information with the Building Safety Regulator.
- Consult on requiring smoke alarms in social housing and introducing new expectations for carbon monoxide alarms (now complete).
- Consult on measures to ensure that social housing residents are protected from harm caused by poor electrical safety.
- Continue to work with the Social Sector (Building Safety) Engagement Best Practice Group and the Building Safety Regulator to ensure resident voices are heard.

Chapter 1: To be Safe in Your Home 3

- Engagement on safety
- Building Safety Manager for high rise and named Accountable Person
- Two-way engagement with residents on how safety is managed
- Residents automatically receive information about the fire and structural
20 protections in place to manage risks within their building
- Residents have access to a quick and effective route to raise complaints about fire and structural safety
- Residents have information to enable them to understand and fulfil their safety responsibilities
- Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEPs)

Chapter 1: To be Safe in Your Home - Impacts

- Unprecedented consultation and ongoing engagement
- Different from “Resident Involvement”
- New areas of work
- Provision of information
- Resident safety comes first
- Staffing resource required
- Housing Revenue Account needs to provide the resource to deliver

Chapter 2: Know how your landlord is performing 1

- Tenants need to be able to hold their landlords to account
- RSH to bring in a set of tenant satisfaction measures for all landlords on things that matter to tenants – consultation already underway.
- A new access to information scheme for social housing tenants of providers so that information relating to landlords is easily accessible by tenants.
- Landlords required to provide complete transparency in publishing and reporting expenditure including levels of executive remuneration.
- 22 • Information to be in an accessible format so tenants can see how funds are being spent
- Tenants able to challenge whether money is being spent on the things that matter to them
- Landlords required to identify a senior person in their organisation who is responsible for ensuring they comply with the consumer standards set by the Regulator of Social Housing.
- Landlords to report to every tenant on such matters at least once a year, if not continuously, using technology.

Chapter 2: Know how your landlord is performing 2

Draft Performance Measures

- Decent Homes Standard compliance
- Responsive repairs completed right first time
- Tenant satisfaction with landlord's repairs and maintenance service
- Compliance with health and safety obligations:
 - Gas safety
 - Electrical safety
 - Fire safety
 - Asbestos
 - Water safety
 - Lift safety
- Tenant satisfaction with the health and safety of their home

Chapter 2: Know how your landlord is performing 3

Draft Performance Measures

- Number of complaints relative to the size of the landlord
- % of complaints resolved within agreed timescale
- Tenant satisfaction with landlord's complaints handling
- Number of complaints relating to fairness and/or respect, relative to the size of the landlord
- Tenant satisfaction that their landlord listens to their views and takes notice of them
- Tenant satisfaction with landlord's engagement with tenants

Chapter 2: Know how your landlord is performing 4

Draft Performance Measures

- % of communal areas meeting the required standard
- Number of complaints relating to communal areas, relative to the size of the landlord
- Tenant satisfaction with landlord actions to keep communal areas clean and safe
- Tenant satisfaction with landlord contribution to the neighbourhood associated with their home
- Number of complaints relating to anti-social behaviour, relative to the size of the landlord
- Tenant satisfaction with landlord's handling of anti-social behaviour
- Tenant overall satisfaction with the service their landlord provides

Chapter 2: Know how your landlord is performing 5

Impacts

- More performance measures to include in Annual Report with a focus on building safety and compliance
- Real time data and technology needed to support publication
- Greater level of detail on expenditure
- Likely to be greater scrutiny on Housing Revenue Account spend which is ring-fenced by statute so that rental income can only be spend on activities that relate to the management and maintenance of the tenants homes
- More work with Ambassadors to understand spending
- Responsible person for ensuring Consumer Standards are being met

Chapter 3: Complaints dealt with promptly and fairly

- Building Safety Bill removed democratic filter, speeding up access to the Housing Ombudsman
- Expanded the Housing Ombudsman service which is aiming to halve its decision times by March 2022.
- Increased the Housing Ombudsman's powers to take action against landlords where needed. The Housing Ombudsman has published a new Complaint Handling Code.
- Two stage complaint process, not three with 10 day max response time

Chapter 3: Complaints dealt with promptly and fairly

- Support improved complaint handling by landlords and hold them to account through stronger action by the Housing Ombudsman.
- MHCLG to run an awareness campaign to publicise complaining
- MHCLG to formalise and strengthen the relationship between the Regulator of Social Housing and the Housing Ombudsman by introducing a statutory requirement for both bodies to co-operate with each other in undertaking their responsibilities in holding landlords to account.
- MHCLG to make the Housing Ombudsman a statutory consultee for any proposal concerning changes to the Regulator of Social Housing's economic and consumer standards.
- MHCLG to make the Regulator of Social Housing a statutory consultee for any changes to the Housing Ombudsman Scheme.

Chapter 3: Complaints dealt with promptly and fairly

Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code Impacts

- Moving to a two stage process
- Need to adopt the HO definition of a complaint
- Need to publish exclusions (vexatious complaints)
- Updated policy and process to be available on-line
- Reasonable adjustments policy to be in place
- Complaint officer post to be recruited
- Investigating officers to have autonomy and authority
- Continuing to promote tenants being able to complain

Chapter 4: To be treated with respect, backed by a strong consumer regulator for tenants 1

- Strengthened the remit and powers of the RSH
- RSH to proactively monitor and drive landlords' compliance with its consumer standards.
- Remove the 'serious detriment test' and introduce routine inspections for the largest landlords (with over 1,000 homes) every four years.
- RSH's objectives to explicitly cover safety and transparency, reviewing consumer standards
- RSH to have the power to publish a Code of Practice on the consumer standards to be clearer on what landlords are required to deliver.
- Strengthen RSH's enforcement powers to tackle failing landlords and to respond to new challenges facing the sector, including removing the cap on the level of fines it can issue, introducing Performance Improvement Plans for landlords failing to comply, and introducing a new power to arrange emergency repairs if needed where a survey uncovers evidence of systemic landlord failures.
- Set out an expectation for all landlords to self-refer breaches with the regulatory standards.

Chapter 4: To be treated with respect, backed by a strong consumer regulator for tenants 2

- Continued Co-regulation
- “The existing regulatory regime works on the basis of co-regulation. This means that it is the responsibility of the boards of housing associations and ³ other private providers of social housing, or of Councillors in local authority landlords, to be assured that they comply with the outcome focused standards set by the regulator”
- On safety, “Driving and embedding culture change throughout organisations is the collective responsibility of Boards and, in the case of local authorities, Councillors.”
- Landlords to identify and make public a nominated person responsible for compliance with their health and safety requirements.

Chapter 5: To have your voice heard by your landlord 1

- RSH to require landlords to seek out best practice and consider how they can continually improve the way they engage with social housing tenants.
- RSH to deliver a new opportunities and empowerment programme for social housing residents, to support more effective engagement between ³² landlords and residents, and to give residents tools to influence their landlords and hold them to account.
- RSH to review professional training and development to ensure residents receive a high standard of customer service.

Chapter 5: To have your voice heard by your landlord 2

Impacts

- Engagement is more than just resident involvement with landlords.
- Additional training for tenants on how to engage
- Tackling loneliness through ongoing engagement with tenants
- Tailored engagement for individual tenants
- Meeting tenants personally and finding out:
 - What matters to each tenant
 - Check on the general condition of the home (unreported repairs/damp)
 - Gather information on protected characteristics, contact preferences, reasonable adjustments needed and contacts
 - Promote tenant portal to aid channel shift and effective reporting of repairs etc

Chapter 6: To have a good quality home and neighbourhood to live in 1

- Decarbonisation of social housing grants
- Health and wellbeing initiatives, promoting more and better green spaces
- Review the Decent Homes Standard to consider if it should be updated, including how it can better support the decarbonisation and energy efficiency of social homes, and improve communal and green spaces.
- ³⁴ Continue to engage with the latest evidence on the impact of housing conditions on health, including COVID-19 transmission, and actively consider options to mitigate these impacts.
- Review professionalisation to consider how well housing staff are equipped to work with people with mental health needs and encourage best practice for landlords working with those with mental health needs.
- Clarify the roles of agencies involved in tackling anti-social behaviour and signpost tenants to those agencies who can give them the most appropriate support and assistance when faced with anti-social behaviour.
- Consider the results of the allocations evidence collection exercise findings to ensure that housing is allocated in the fairest way possible and achieves the best outcomes for local places and communities.

Chapter 6: To have a good quality home and neighbourhood to live in 2

- Much greater support for tenants facing anti-social behaviour and crime
- MHCLG to work with the NHF and LGA to encourage social landlords to inform residents of their right to make a community trigger application
- 33 • RSH to review regulatory standards to make it clear that landlords should have a policy setting out how they should tackle issues surrounding domestic abuse
- Supporting the Armed Forces Community

Chapter 6: To have a good quality home and neighbourhood to live in - Impacts

- Greater engagement with tenants on carbon reduction initiatives
- Higher quality of green space provision
- Increased regime of estate quality inspections needs resourcing
- Strong emphasis on improving ASB services and support for victims of ASB
- Strong emphasis on dealing with domestic abuse
- ASB and the estate to be included in performance indicators

Chapter 7: To be supported to take your first step to ownership

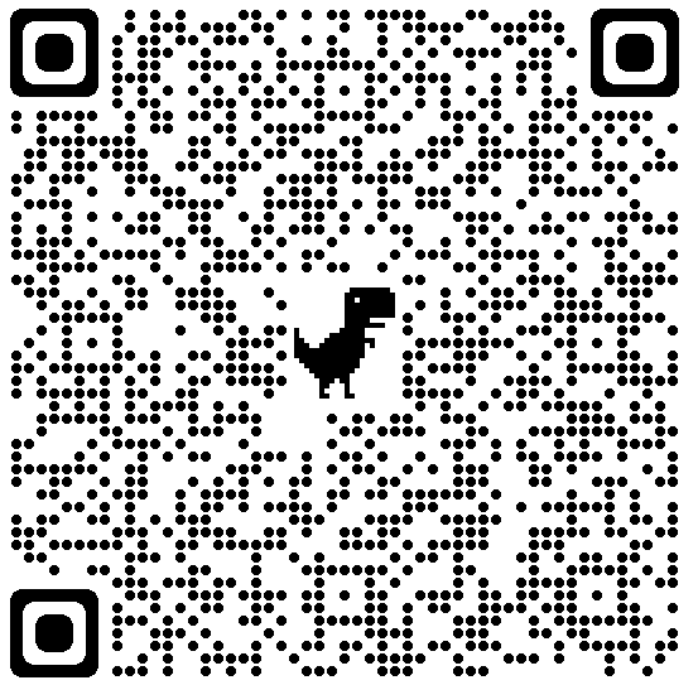
- Raft of initiatives to promote building social rent homes and ownership
- Helping residents into home ownership
- New shared ownership model
- Continuing to support the Right to Buy
- Leasehold reform and supporting leaseholders

Summary

- Upping the game
- Wide range of new activities and “new work”
- Lots of engagement work is essential to understand tenants concerns and needs
- Focus on tenants first, listening to them, respecting them and then what affects them:
 - ∞ • The home and the quality of the home
 - The estate and the environment
 - Fire safety
 - Building safety
 - Consumer standards and ASB
- Significant budget investment needed to deliver
- Don't wait for legislation and regulation

You can read the full version of “The Social Housing White Paper: The Charter for Social Housing Residents” at [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/936098/The charter for social housing residents - social housing white paper.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/936098/The_charter_for_social_housing_residents_-_social_housing_white_paper.pdf) or using the QR code from a smart phone or device.

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Questions?

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