

Tenant Board Meeting

Wednesday 28th January 2026

Attendees:

Liz Perryman	Tenant Board Member (Chair)
Gerry Crease	Tenant Board Member
Stella Morris	Tenant Board Member
Sara Szczepanski	Tenant Board Member
Tony Cole	Tenant Board Member
Deborah Fenton	Director of Housing
David White	Head of Housing Transformation and Regulation
Vicky Freer	Tenant Insight and Improvement Manager
Jez Robbins	Housing Management Lead- Income and Sustainment
Georgia Mecoy	Tenant Engagement Co-ordinator
Kerry Lecomber	Tenant Engagement Co-ordinator
Jeni Smithies	Finance Business Partner
Cllr Ruth Hendry	Housing Portfolio Holder (Babergh)
Cllr Richard Winch	Housing Portfolio Holder (Mid Suffolk)
David Coaley	Observing as a prospective Tenant Board Member
Damien Roche	HQN (Observing for Mock Inspection)

Apologies

Paula Warren, Tim Riach

1. Declarations of interest

None to declare for the vote for communication scrutiny recommendations

2. Action(s) from last meeting

- Cavendish & Minden external staircases – Previous meeting raised concerns regarding communication and missed appointments. Tony reported receiving a letter confirming an investigation date, but no officer attended. Concerns remain in the community as residents are unsure what works are happening and whether staircases are being removed.

Action: David White and Deborah Fenton to follow up.

- Results from the Communication scrutiny project were shared with the Board.

3. Council Housing Assurance Report (15 mins)

David White presented the Q3 performance report, aligned to the four consumer standards and due for SLT and Cabinet review.

Key Performance Updates

- **Repairs**
 - 100% of emergency repairs completed on time.
 - Routine repairs remain on target (20 working days).

- Urgent repairs below target, but assurance provided they will meet target by end of Q4.
- **Rent Collection**
 - Expected to reach 100% by end of March.
- **Complaints**
 - Stage 1: performance above the 85% target.
 - Stage 2: 100% completed within 20 days.
- **Compliance**
 - Reporting 100% gas compliance for the first time, though this fluctuates due to access issues.
 - Small number of electrical checks outstanding.
- **Damp and Mould / Awaab's Law**
 - New legislation requires strict timeframes for HHSRS issues.
 - Emergency hazards not completed within 24 hours were due to tenant choice, which is permitted under the legislation.
 - Commitment to transparent reporting.

Questions & Discussion

- **Cllr Winch** asked whether compliance performance would return to target once reporting errors were corrected.
David White: Yes, provided tenant requested delays are correctly categorised. -requested delays are correctly categorised.
- **Tony Cole** raised concerns about a decant at Cavendish Way where tenants reportedly were not supported with food during temporary accommodation.
David White: The new Decant Policy is being drafted and will come to Tenant Board for feedback. Tenants should be supported with costs such as food; the tenant is encouraged to raise a complaint if dissatisfied.

Stock Condition & Decency

- Non-decent homes reducing due to the Asset Improvement Programme. -decent homes reducing due to the Asset Improvement Programme.
- Wall insulation and cladding remain at 0% as contractors are being onboarded.
- Many non-decent homes are due to thermal comfort issues. -decent homes are due to thermal comfort issues.
- Prioritisation will be given to households with vulnerabilities.
- Forecast:
 - Q1 next financial year – 10.5% non-decent-decent
 - End of next financial year – approx. 3.6% Babergh / 4.9% Mid Suffolk
- Remaining 19% of homes will undergo stock condition surveys.

Transparency, Influence & Accountability Standard

- TSMs (Tenant Satisfaction Measures) increasing in Q3.
- After year-end (including Q4), targets for 26/27 will be set in collaboration with Tenant Board.

- Stage 1 complaint acknowledgements were flagged as “red” due to system errors, now being addressed.

Lettings Process

- Satisfaction with the letting process and property condition is below target in both districts.
- Issues linked to void contractor performance and internal staffing pressures.
- All properties are now **post inspected before being released for letting. Inspected before being released for letting-inspected before being released for letting**
- No properties will be let with outstanding works going forward.

Question:

- **Cllr Winch** requested confirmation of when post inspections began. -inspections began.

Action: David to provide date.

Antisocial Behaviour (ASB) Satisfaction Social Behaviour (ASB) Satisfaction-Social Behaviour (ASB) Satisfaction

- Only surveyed when a case closes.
- In Q3, only 2 responses, both very unsatisfied.
- Expected improvements following actions from Scrutiny recommendations.
- A new Neighbourhood & Housing Lead with community safety experience has joined the service.

Repairs Satisfaction

- Continues to exceed 90%, reflecting intensive focus on repairs improvement work.

Scrutiny Action Plans

- ASB: 59% completion
- Complaints: 56% completion- Kerry Lecomber confirmed the score has since increased to 71% and will show in next quarter.
- Communications Scrutiny action plan will begin once recommendations are finalised.

Block Inspections

- Target: 100% quarterly inspections.
- Seven blocks were missed in December due to sickness/annual leave but completed early January.

4. Communication Scrutiny

- 20 participants reviewed four communication types and their own experiences.
- A thematic analysis and summary report were shared.
- Between 24th–25th January, Board members ranked 17 recommendations; 5 of 7 members completed the exercise.

Discussion:

- Liz Perryman raised concerns that sharing email chains for repairs could compromise tenant privacy.

Outcome:

All present voted all 17 of the ranked recommendations should be prioritised by relevant teams.

Action: Tenant Board to decide who will present the report to Overview & Scrutiny in April.

5. Housing Revenue Account Discussion

- Reviewed proposals published for 20th & 22nd January Council meetings.
- Differences in service charge increases explained:
 - Babergh previously increased annually
 - Mid Suffolk did not, so charges are lower and moving toward cost recovery
- Only communal areas are affected; in most cases, service charges are fully covered by benefits.

Voids Discussion

Deborah Fenton provided an update:

- Current contractor covers both districts; this is proving unmanageable.
- Other contractors now receiving void work.
- Rapid (voids contractor) is on an improvement notice; contract may be rescinded.
- Post inspections now applied to every void.-inspections now applied to every void.
- Lettable Standard previously agreed but not consistently applied.
- Rechargeable Repairs Policy exists but void processes need improvement.
- Issues where unsuitable lettings occurred due to previous processes; now mitigated through Housing Management reviewing suitability before allocations.

Questions:

- Liz Perryman queried cleaning standards in voids.
Deborah Fenton: Hazardous properties receive specialist cleaning; expected to meet standards before re-let.
- Liz also asked about recharging tenants for damage.
Deborah Fenton: Yes, under rechargeable repairs policy, but processes need strengthening.

Additional Notes:

- Jeni Smithies confirmed void costs and timelines are improving.
- Cllr Winch noted significant stock investment planned (approx. £45m in Mid Suffolk).

6. Housing Staffing Update

David White gave an update on staffing within the housing team

- This was Deborah Fenton's final Tenant Board meeting (leaves 6 Feb).

Board members expressed their thanks for her leadership and engagement.

- David White will leave on 20 March.

New starters:

- Nathan Sulley – Communities Lead (started 27 Jan)
- Doug Stother – Head of Housing Management (starts 2 Feb)
- Interim Director of Housing: Mandeep Bhogil who may attend the next Board meeting.

9. Any other business

- Scrutiny project planning moved to February so the Council Housing Assurance Report can be considered.
- HQN Focus Group – 5th February, 12:30–1:30.
- Director of Housing Interviews – 6th February

Thanks extended to Liz and Gerry for volunteering.

-----meeting closed 19:17 -----