

Tenant Board Meeting

Wednesday 28th May 2025

Attendees:

Marcus Cooper	Tenant Board Member
Gerry Crease	Tenant Board Member
Tony Cole	Tenant Board Member
Charmaine Jolly	Tenant Board Member
David White	Housing Transformation Manager
Georgia Mecoy	Tenant Engagement Co-ordinator
Kerry Lecomber	Tenant Engagement Co-ordinator
James Hart	Complaints and Feedback Officer
Gary Allen	Assistant Manager- Customer Experience
Cllr Richard Winch	Housing Portfolio Holder
Cllr Jessie Carter	Housing Portfolio Holder

Apologies

Liz Perryman

Actions from last meeting and introduction

- VF to send around true TSM stats once she receives them
- GM to send out Unreasonable and Persistent Complaints Policy
- Representative to attend May meeting on Customer Service call times

Declarations of Interest

None stated.

Pre meeting

MC has read the Unreasonable and Persistent Complaints Policy and thought the policy was good and interesting, clear and in depth

1) Complaints Overview- James Hart

James presented slides on our complaints process and data

The Key findings:

- The Council received 46 stage two complaints between 1st October 2024 and 31st March 2025 (down 60 from the period before)
- The majority of complaints escalated are for the Housing Repairs and Maintenance Service or the Asset Compliance (Gas/Electrics) team.
- The number of upheld complaints have reduced, this has coincided with the reduction of complaints escalated to stage two.

Key themes from complaints:

- Reduction in Housing Repairs and Maintenance complaints
- Increase in Asset Compliance, Asset Management, and Tenancy Services Complaints
- Asset Compliance complaints tend to be regarding the Council's gas contractor for lack of communication, missed/cancelled appointments and multiple visits to rectify matters.
- Asset Management complaints are regarding planned works and tenant adaptations.
- Tenancy Services have the highest % of complaints closed as not considered to be a complaint, over 60%
- Complaints escalated at stage two often are escalated for the following reasons:
 - Lack of forward plan agreed at stage one
 - Lack of communication since stage one response
 - Stage one complaint has not resolved matters raised
 - Incorrect information provided in the stage one response

Full Presentation can be found in the Tenant Board slide deck

MC: Can we have more information on why more complaints are not upheld compared to last year?

JH+ DW: We now have better policies in place and with the introduction of the Tenant Handbook, tenants now know what they are responsible for and what the council are responsible for. This means if a complaint is raised about us not doing works which is a tenant responsibility, we do not uphold the complaint.

Cllr Winch: Does our Acuity Data reflect our improved stats?

DW: Yes, we can see in our TSM data that perception with complaints is on the rise. We also now have an open ended question so if they tell us they are unhappy we ask why, and learn from this data.

Cllr Winch: How are people taking being told that their complaint is not being upheld

James: Quite well. We sign post a lot so people can see and read the right information. Additionally if its not upheld because its service request we tell them how to get the service they need.

ACTION:GM to Send the board the presentation to look at themes.

2) Call wait times- Gary Allen

Gary Allen took the TB through a presentation around Customer Services call wait times.

Customer Services takes calls about:

- Council Tax, Housing Benefit and Housing Rents
- Housing Queries (including Gateway to Homechoice and Housing repairs)
- Environmental Health and General Enquiries

Performance

- Over the last financial year, we received 128,410 calls Our average wait time across the year was 1 minute and 1 second.
- Our abandonment rate was 6%.
- Average length of our calls was 4 minutes 19 seconds.
- 77% of people who completed our post call telephone survey were either satisfied or highly satisfied with the service they received.
- Average wait times can change during high demand period, such as Council Tax billing or rent letters being posted. During this we can see over 900 calls which is taken by 21 Full time members of staff, we can get support from other teams in these times.
- We perform better than other Local Authorities whose wait times are 275 seconds and 175 seconds compared to our 60 seconds.

We process around 18,380 emails every year 1675 live chats were dealt with in the same period. Additionally, we answered 5687 social media enquiries. We also offer a face-to-face provision via our Customer Access Points in Stowmarket, Sudbury, Shotley, Hadleigh and Eye. Last year we saw 2634 people at our Customer Access Points.

GC: It worries me that you ring up and hear the same recorded message saying how busy we are, and its easier to go online. You can hear the same message multiple times, and it is frustrating.

GA: We will take the feedback away. I appreciate people want to get on and talk to someone rather than hear repeated messages. We can look to change this; we did change this last year. If we think of ways this could be better, I happy to take these on, feel free to let us know.

PW: I was surprised with how short the message is

GA: The longest you have to wait is 1 minute of messaging. The Board are more than welcome to try some mystery shopping on the Customer Services line. But please speak to someone when they pick up to avoid increasing the abandonment rate.

3) Complaints Scrutiny Update- Kerry Lecomber

KL updated the board on the Complaints scrutiny project. We have identified four tenants for the customer journey mapping exercise, and interviews will take place over the next few weeks. We will hold two workshops for this project:

- Evening online workshop – Monday 14th July

- Daytime in person workshop – Wednesday 16th July (Now changed to Thursday 17th July)

The workshops will be attended by a mixture of tenants and officers. After the sessions we will write up all of the recommendations that have come from the sessions and bring these to Tenant Board in August.

4) Stop the Social Housing Stigma campaign- Kerry Lecomber

KL took the board through an update on the Stop the Social Housing Stigma Campaign.

Using the recommendations that came out of the workshop in November 2024, from this an action plan was developed with 26 individual actions. The progress of the action plan is 25% overall. This progress is tracked via Pentana and the teams meeting bimonthly to go through the action plan. This action plan will now be reviewed by board Quarterly

5) Any Other Business- All

- TSM targets workshop – We will be holding a workshop in July to set the new Targets for out Tenant Satisfaction Measures. All will be invited and encouraged to join.
- Tenant Engagement Annual Review- will be sent to Board to review

ACTION: GM to send

- Board Training and 1-2-1- GM will be sending round your first training webinar to complete for next meeting. This will be on the Consumer Standards and regulation. Additionally, can board members consider what they enjoy and what they want to learn more about in preparation for your next 1-2-1's.

ACTION: GM to send training

- Local Government Review Consultation- link to be shared with Board members. We encourage you to complete this and have a voice on how your council will look after Local government reform.

Cllr Winch and DW explain what Local Government Reform and devolution is and how it could impact the council.

ACTION: GM to send link

- There will be an opportunity for Tenant Board to help with the Tenancy Services Interviews.

ACTION: GM to send more information

-----Meeting ended at 19:27-----