Minutes from TOP meeting – (15/05/2026)

Attendance

Jack Smith **(JS)**

Stuart Pattison **(SP)**

Cali Gadd **(CG)**

Sandra Longstreth **(SL)**

Ian Allan **(IA)**

Mike Richter **(MR)**

Graham Nash **(GN)**

Eluned Woods **(EW)**

1. Introduction

- SP opened the meeting by providing an overview of the **TOP,** outlining its purpose, structure and how it supports the organisation in improving housing services.
- All attendees introduced themselves and were formally welcomed.
- SP highlighted key discussion topics for the session, including:
    - Customer satisfaction
    - Complaints and the Ombudsman
    - Housing regulation and compliance
    - Opportunities for tenants to ask questions and influence services

2. Overview of Housing Services

- SP delivered a high-level overview of the **housing service structure**.
- This included:
    - An explanation of Andy's role within the service

    - Clarification of responsibilities held by SP and Tara
    - A brief introduction to the wider management team and their areas of responsibility
- The aim was to provide context on how services are delivered and managed across the organisation.

3. Overview of Governance Model

- SP explained the governance framework, highlighting the three key groups:
    - Member groups
    - Officer groups
    - Resident groups
- MR shared insight into his role as a tenant representative on the Housing Committee, explaining the responsibilities and expectations of the position.
- SP discussed the need for clearer direction on where tenant input is most effective, expressing a desire to:
    - Strengthen tenant influence
    - Potentially introduce an elected tenant member on the Housing Committee
- SL presented on the 'Responsive Repairs Communication' scrutiny project, covering:
    - The process followed
    - Tenant involvement and feedback
    - The overall success and value of the exercise
    - She noted upcoming scrutiny work on damp and mould, in line with new legislation (Awaab's Law).

- SP shared his aspiration to establish multiple tenant working groups to focus on different service areas.
    - The intention is for the TOP group to act as a central body that guides and informs these groups.
- MR raised concerns about the difficulty of recruiting and retaining tenant volunteers.
- IA added that tenant engagement is a recurring challenge, which shows the importance of ensuring all tenant voices are heard, not just a small group.
- SP suggested potential solutions such as:
    - Holding evening meetings
    - Increasing online/virtual engagement options
- MR questioned why tenants cannot participate in multiple panels or groups, suggesting more flexibility and the chance to increase numbers on all groups.
- EW agreed, after claiming she was indecisive when deciding which group to join and expressing interest in broader involvement.
- MR also explained his role on the Housing Oversight Board, outlining its purpose and the type of strategic work undertaken.
- SP highlighted digital inclusion as a possible way to improve engagement and participation going forward.

4. Break

- SL spoke positively about the TAG group, describing it as welcoming and supportive.
- IA noted that SDC shows strong tenant involvement practices.

5. Housing Regulation

- SP provided an overview of:
    - The complaints process
    - The role of the Housing Ombudsman and the Regulator of Social Housing
- SP introduced the Consumer Standards, explaining the four key areas:
    - Safety and Quality Standard
    - Neighbourhood and Community Standard
    - Tenancy Standard
    - Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard
- IA raised concerns about service charges, identifying them as a major issue for tenants.
- SP reviewed recent KPIs and performance data, including charts and trends.
- IA noted that the organisation may be missing valuable tenant feedback. This was following on from the KPI sheet which showed the number of repairs undertook in each quarter.

6. Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs)

- SP explained the purpose and importance of Tenant Satisfaction Measures.
- A comparison was provided between:
    - 2025/26 results
    - 2024/25 results
    - National benchmarks

- This helped highlight areas of strength as well as those requiring improvement.

8. Ombudsman Summary

- SP delivered a summary of recent Ombudsman findings and the impact on our service delivery.
- MR asked whether there is a repeat pattern or trend in complaints, suggesting that identifying common issues could help target improvements and reduce future complaints.
- After this SP claimed that our NEC system cannot keep up with this and is not fit for that purpose.

9. Improving Services with Tenants

- SP outlined the future role of the TOP group, focusing on:
    - Increasing tenant influence
    - Strengthening links between tenants and decision-making
- SP referenced the upcoming Housing Committee (HC) meeting in June, noting:
    - A new pet policy is under development? Check with SP to confirm
    - He would like the policy to be reviewed and formally signed off by the TOP group.

10. Why were you here today?

- Graham - He likes the idea of being at a level where councillors would be able to actively listen to Tenant views. He also said that he is very interested in the group and being able to analyse the data available.
- Mike - Mentioned that communication needs to be better, this may help influence more people to get involved.

- Sandra - Agreed with the above from Mike and said that she believes no one hears about the good that the council does. They only hear the negative, so it is about changing the narrative. – She also believes that this will help people to get involved.

11. Actions to take away for those involved.

- Need to take a closer look at the terms of reference (Where it states that you cannot be involved in more than one group).