

## Minutes of the Tenant Scrutiny Group Teams Meeting

Monday 10th November 2025, 10.00am – 11.30am

Group Members Present	Eric Shipton (ES) - Chair Ann Kelly (AK) Sarah Bennett (SB) Pat Cheese (PC) Sheila de Vaney (SV) Amanda Broughton (AB) Julie Ashton (JA)	- Tenant Rep -Chair - Tenant Rep - Tenant Rep - Tenant Rep - Tenant Rep - Tenant Rep - Tenant Rep
Officers Present	Sarah Gardner (Notes) John Jamieson (JJ) Richard Labran (RL) Strategy Manager Lee Wood (LW) Mushtaq Hussain Tracy Holsey Jenny Southall Maria Johnson	- Change Management Officer (RI) - Head of Housing Management - Senior Housing Modernisation and  - Head of Planned Maintenance - Repairs and Maintenance SSM East - Head of Income Collection - Rent Operations Manager - Technical Operations Manager
Apologies	Maria Rawlins (MR) Matthew Fox Redfern (MFR) Asha Patel (AP) Maintenance Mara Shephard (MS)	- Tenant Rep - Tenant Rep - Interim Head of Repairs and  - Performance Team

Item	Action
1.0	<u>Welcome and Introductions</u>
1.1	ES welcomed everyone to the meeting.
2.0	<u>Apologies</u>
2.1	See above.

Item	Action
3.0	<b><u>Minutes of the meeting held on 8th September 2025</u></b>
3.1	Minutes agreed.
4.0	<b><u>Matters Arising</u></b>
4.1	None
5.0	<b><u>Call In – Revenues, Benefits and Rents Team</u></b>
5.1	JS gave an overview of the recovery process which involves:
	<b>Initial Automated Actions</b>
	<p>The first two actions are automated reminders sent to tenants via various communication methods (e.g., letters, emails, texts). These are triggered when no rent payment is received. If the issue persists, tenants are asked to complete an income and expenditure form to assess affordability.</p>
	<b>Notice Seeking Possession (NSP)</b>
	<p>This is the first legal step in the arrears process. Before issuing an NSP, significant work is done resulting in multiple contacts with the tenant (calls, letters, emails). Case reviews to identify any benefit issues or other barriers and support is offered to resolve issues and avoid legal action. A Court Hearing is only pursued after extensive engagement and attempts to resolve the issue. This may involve home visits, further contact attempts, arrangements for repayment. Court outcomes vary, but judges often emphasise sustainable repayment plans.</p>
	<b>Eviction</b>
	<p>This is the final stage and only occurs after all other avenues have been exhausted. The process is lengthy and involved, with many steps and support efforts in between.</p>
5.2	DH then discussed the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for the team.
	<b>Cash Collection</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Definition: % of housing rent collected during the year.</li> </ul>

Item		Action
5.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Target: monthly profiled to track progress toward year-end.</li> <li>• Last Month's Target: 93.95%</li> <li>• Actual Performance: 95.66% (above target)</li> </ul> <p><b>Evictions Prevented</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focuses on sustaining tenancies.</li> <li>• Ensures evictions are limited to “won’t pay” tenants, not “can’t pay” tenants.</li> <li>• Reflects proactive support and intervention.</li> </ul> <p><b>Correspondence Handling</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Target: 98% of letters responded to within 8 days.</li> <li>• Performance: 100% consistently – strong area due to experienced staff.</li> </ul> <p><b>Former Tenancy Arrears</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hardest to recover (tenants have moved).</li> <li>• Target: Recover 37.5% of transferred arrears.</li> <li>• Actual: 41.35% (above target, in the green)</li> </ul> <p><b>Direct Debit Rejections</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Issue: Payments reversed due to insufficient funds.</li> <li>• Officers proactively contact tenants to find sustainable alternatives.</li> <li>• Aim: Ensure affordable and reliable payment methods.</li> </ul> <p><b>Benchmarking Insights</b></p> <p>Total Arrears: £15.4 million</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Large figure but improved from last year.</li> <li>• Context: BCC are the largest authority in Europe.</li> <li>• Other councils (e.g., Camden, Southwark) have higher arrears.</li> <li>• Evictions per 1,000 Properties - despite size, eviction rates are not the highest. Sheffield and Nottingham have more evictions.</li> </ul> <p>Average Arrears per Property</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 26,000 tenants in arrears.</li> <li>• Average arrears per property: £270</li> <li>• Indicates strong performance compared to other authorities.</li> </ul>	

Item		Action
	<p>MJ then gave an overview of <b>Early Intervention &amp; Support Measures</b></p> <p>Early intervention is a core principle of the rent recovery approach, aiming to prevent arrears from escalating. Several targeted initiatives support tenants at different stages:</p> <p>Alternative Payment Arrangement (APA) Initiative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supports tenants transitioning from Housing Benefit to Universal Credit (UC).</li> <li>• Offers to have rent paid directly to the landlord instead of the tenant.</li> <li>• Proven effective: £1.8 million in arrears prevented year-to-date.</li> </ul> <p>Dedicated Introductory Tenancy Team</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manages new tenancies during the first 12 months.</li> <li>• Provides intensive engagement to help tenants establish good payment habits and understand rent responsibilities.</li> </ul> <p>Welfare Coordinators in Job Centres</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Six officers cover 10 Birmingham job centres.</li> <li>• Hold surgeries to support vulnerable tenants, especially those new to UC.</li> <li>• Help resolve issues like backdating, untidy tenancies, and housing cost errors directly with DWP.</li> </ul> <p>Debt Advisors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offers comprehensive financial advice.</li> <li>• Help tenants manage rent alongside other essentials (e.g., utilities, food).</li> <li>• Take a holistic approach to financial wellbeing.</li> </ul> <p>Eviction Prevention Panel</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Final review stage before eviction.</li> <li>• Assesses whether additional support or funding (e.g., DHP, Housing Support Fund) can prevent eviction.</li> <li>• Ensures every possible option is explored before taking legal action.</li> </ul> <p><b>Current &amp; Future Initiatives</b></p>	

Item		Action
	<p>Housing Perks (Launched January, Full Rollout in August)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A discount and savings app for social housing and council tenants.</li> <li>• Offers vouchers and discounts on:</li> <li>• Everyday shopping (e.g., supermarkets, petrol)</li> <li>• Days out and leisure activities</li> <li>• Impact so far: 7,000+ tenants signed up, £746,000 spent via the app, £28,000 saved by tenants.</li> </ul> <p>Rent Contributions Feature:</p> <p>Weekly savings are collected into a "pot".</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Funds can be used to: Build credit, pay off arrears, Cover rent shortfalls.</li> <li>• Already £5,500+ paid towards rent accounts (and rising).</li> </ul> <p>Real-life impact:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One tenant with two disabled children is using the app to build credit and plans to take a payment holiday in December, easing financial pressure during the holidays.</li> </ul> <p><b>New Engagement Software (Launching Early 2026)</b></p> <p>Aims to improve tenant communication by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contacting tenants at the right time, in the right way (e.g., email, text, call).</li> <li>• Tailoring contact methods to individual preferences and availability.</li> </ul> <p><b>Benefits:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Frees up staff time for more meaningful conversations.</li> <li>• Enhances support for vulnerable tenants.</li> </ul> <p><b>Automation of UC Housing Element Verification (Planned for January 2026)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Will automate the rent verification process for Universal Credit claims.</li> <li>• Expected outcomes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Faster processing</li> <li>◦ Fewer delays</li> <li>◦ Smoother tenant experience</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>Targeted Campaigns</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 7–8 campaigns already run for Housing Perks.</li> <li>• Payment Holiday Campaigns: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Notify tenants with small arrears that if they clear their balance by a set date, they qualify for payment holidays (2 in December 2 in March).</li> <li>◦ Helps tenants clear accounts and pause payments during key periods.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	

Item		Action
5.4	<p><b>Payment &amp; Contact Methods</b></p> <p>Payment Options</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Direct Debit</li> <li>• Alternative Payment Arrangements (via DWP)</li> <li>• Bank Standing Orders</li> <li>• Automated Payment Line</li> <li>• Cash payment options.</li> </ul> <p>Contact Methods</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Letters</li> <li>• Phone calls</li> <li>• Direct messaging (email, text)</li> <li>• Home visits</li> </ul> <p>The new software will help identify the most effective contact method for each tenant, ensuring communication is timely, appropriate, and tenant friendly.</p>	
5.5	<p>TH - Thank you, everybody - any questions ES - With regards to the Housing Perks? Would you be willing to give this talk to city board because in my eyes this is a vital way of helping people save money. TH - We're actually scheduled to be at CHIB on 27<sup>th</sup> Nov so we can include it in our presentation. It has been very successful. We are very proud, and we want to roll it out as much as we can. TH - Anyone in the household can use this option, and any amount spent will be credited against the rent account if they choose. It's a great way to save. We all regularly use vouchers in our daily lives, so this is simply an extension of that concept for our tenants. We're really pleased to offer this, and we'll make sure it's included as an item in the next City Housing Improvement Board presentation.</p> <p>ES - There's growing concern about residents living in properties without paying rent. Questions are starting to be raised, such as: If there are many people on the waiting list wanting to join Birmingham City Council housing, why can't we replace non-payers with those who are willing to pay? Wouldn't that lead to a better service for everyone? People see it as unfair. TH - That's exactly what we do. As we've</p>	

Item		Action
6.0	<p>evidenced, before applying for an eviction warrant, we reach the eviction prevention stage. This is a critical point because some tenants bury their heads in the sand, while others genuinely want to resolve the issue. At this stage, we make every effort to help them—it's their last chance. However, when we do proceed to eviction, it's clear that we're evicting those who won't pay, not those who can't pay. For tenants who can't pay, we provide a wide range of support. Unfortunately, the process is lengthy because it involves going through the courts. The challenge arises when, at court, a tenant with thousands of pounds in arrears is ordered to pay current rent plus a minimal amount toward arrears—sometimes meaning it could take decades to clear the debt. Even at the eviction stage, tenants are advised they can apply to have the eviction suspended, and many do so on the day. Judges often grant another chance to make payments, which happens frequently. Jenny mentioned earlier that tenants can return to chambers multiple times, and ultimately, these decisions rest with the courts, not the Council. Despite this, we monitor outcomes closely. When evictions do occur, we track whether those individuals present themselves as homeless afterward—and they don't. That reassures us that we are evicting the right people: those who refuse to pay, not those who genuinely need help.</p> <p>ES – OK thank you, thank you for coming. It's been really insightful; a lot of good work is done by your team and that's shown through your figures and BVPIs.</p> <p><b><u>TSG Report – Q1 April - Jun 2025</u></b></p> <p><b>How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your landlord's approach to handling anti-social behaviour? (TSM-Perception)</b></p> <p>Target – 50%, Performance – 52.37% Exceeding Target</p> <p>No data</p>	

Item		Action
6.1	<p><b>ASB cases per 1,000 Stock</b></p> <p>The target is 5 per thousand properties, performance is currently 5.65 so currently not meeting target.</p> <p>JJ - slightly above target but direction of travel is very positive especially as August is usually a high month due to lighter nights and school holidays.</p>	
6.2	<p><b>% ASB cases initially contacted within target</b></p> <p>The target is 80%, and it's currently 92.75% so exceeding target. JJ – performance remains ahead of target and has increased over the last 2 months assisted by the reduction in cases.</p>	
6.3	<p><b>% current ASB cases that have been contacted in the last 4 weeks</b> Target – 75%. Performance was 65.67% so not meeting target. JJ– performance improving but still below target as the housing management redesign beds in we are now seeing improvements from locality working and recruitment of new HOs will further support this.</p>	
6.4	<p><b>DA cases initially contacted within one day.</b></p>	
6.5	<p>Target – 80%. Performance – 94.31%– Exceeding Target</p> <p><b>% current DA cases have been contacted in the last 3 weeks</b></p> <p>Target is 75 and current performance 58.58% Not meeting Target JJ - We think this is being impacted by the service redesign, performance is now improving following the changeover to the new Tenancy Support Team.</p> <p><b>How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your landlord's approach to complaints handling? (TSM – Perception)</b></p> <p>Target – 50% performance – 13.46% Not meeting target.</p> <p><b>No data</b></p>	

Item		Action
6.6	<p><b>Housing Management complaints received per 1,000 properties.</b></p> <p>Target 0.9% Performance- 1.06% JJ – service improvement over last 2 months and less than 0.2% off target.</p>	
6.7	<p><b>Proportion of stage one and stage two complaints responded to agreed timeframes.</b></p> <p>Target is 60 % previous month 98.65%. Exceeding Target</p> <p><b>How satisfied or dissatisfied are you that your landlord keeps these communal areas clean and well-maintained? (TSM – perception)</b></p>	
6.8	<p>Target – 60% Performance – 50.37% Not meeting target.</p> <p>No data</p>	
6.9	<p><b>% of dumped rubbish jobs completed within 15 days – Target – 60% Performance – 48.39% Not meeting Target.</b> JJ - performance gradually improving but impacted by vacancies and additional rubbish/fly tipping as a result of industrial action. There were also some data issues but current performance much improved.</p> <p><b>How satisfied or dissatisfied are you that your landlord makes a positive contribution to your neighbourhood. (TSM – perception)</b></p> <p>Target – 60% Performance – 56.78% Not meeting target.</p> <p>No data</p>	
	<p><b>% of responses to breaches within 10 days – Target – 60% Performance – 88.02% Exceeding Target</b></p> <p>Target 60%, performance – 92.73%. - Exceeding Target</p>	
6.9	<p><b>% current breaches have been contacted in the last 4 weeks</b></p>	

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6.10	<p>Target 60%. Performance – 49.02% Not meeting target JJ – reviewing reasons for a drop in performance considerations include recruitment, focus on proactive visiting, seasonal variation, and significant levels of training and recording data on the system correctly.</p> <p><b>Average void turnaround excluding major works.</b></p>	
6.11	<p>Target – 28 days. Performance – 49.78 days – Not meeting target. JJ – performance improving with both contractors. We have set up a task and finish group who are overseeing further improvements. With letting of new Perry Barr blocks virtually complete this is enabling letting performance to return back to target timescales.</p> <p><b>Average void turnaround major works</b></p>	
6.12	<p>Target – 60. performance – 107.11 days – not meeting target. JJ – performance improving with both contractors. Task and finish group set up and overseeing further improvements.</p> <p><b>Dwellings vacant but available to let (%)</b></p>	
6.13	<p>Target – 0.5% Performance – 0.33 % - Exceeding Target</p> <p>JJ – ahead of target and improving as void backlogs are reduced. This is really good news as we are minimising income loss as well as making more homes available to let.</p> <p><b>Lettings/Voids/Allocations transactional surveys % of positive responses</b></p> <p>No data available</p> <p><b>% of new tenancies visited for the 6-month process</b></p> <p>Target – 80%. Performance – 76.33 % not meeting target. JJ – slightly below target but improving this has been impacted by the changeover to locality working with local</p>	

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6.14	<p>housing officers now beginning to pick up cases rather than a separate team.</p> <p><b>% of tenancies visited in the last three years</b>  <b>Target – 100% Performance – 97.66%- not meeting target.</b></p>	
6.15	<p>JJ – data to be reviewed as considerable focus on visiting, just 2.8% below the 100% target. Once all HO have been recruited to post this should also increase performance.</p>	
6.16	<p><b>% RTB decisions made within 30 days</b></p> <p>Target – 70% Performance- 0.00% - Not meeting target. JJ performance is severely impacted by the rise in RTB applications following the discount reduction (from 40% to 20%) this created a backlog which is now clear, however, there are still 3,500 offers to go out.</p>	
7.0	<p>ES - It's a mixed bag of a report. Can I ask how much of this is down to IT and data recording as much as to lack of officers? JJ – a bit of both. However, things are set to improve significantly in the coming weeks. We're about to introduce a new solution called <b>Go Mobile</b>, which—as the name suggests—will enable officers to work more effectively while out in the field. Instead of returning to the office or working from home to update information on a laptop, officers will soon be able to complete tasks directly on tablet-style devices during visits. This means they can update records and carry out actions live, while meeting with tenants, residents, or inspecting sites. The system is almost ready, currently undergoing final testing, and we expect to roll it out by the end of the calendar year. While IT isn't a hindrance at the moment, this change will make working much more efficient and responsive. ES – thank you.</p> <p><b>Q2 Asset Management and Maintenance Report - Sept 2025</b></p>	

Item		Action
7.1	<p><b>KPI001 – Customer Satisfaction</b> – performance all green and on target</p> <p><b>KPI002 – Work orders completed within timescale</b> – all green and on target.</p> <p><b>KPI004 – Service Improvement Notices / Rectification Notices</b> – 1 SIN for South This will remain in place for the foreseeable future.</p> <p><b>KPI005 – Safety Service Improvement Notice</b> – all green</p> <p><b>KPI006 – Properties with a valid Landlord Gas Safety Record</b>- All green, performance on target</p> <p><b>KPI008 – Appointments kept</b> – All Green and on target.</p> <p><b>KPI009 – Compliance with No Access Process</b> – all green and on target.</p> <p><b>KPI010 – Works orders not resulting in Customer Complaints</b> – All Green and on target.</p> <p><b>KPI011 – Customer Satisfaction Request Rate</b> – South (Amber) 80.22% Performance down from 88.14% the previous month. All the rest Green and on target.</p> <p><b>KPI012 – Work in Progress Overdue</b> – All green and on target.</p> <p><b>KPI014 – Work orders not resulting in a /2/3/4 plus works order being raised</b> – All Green and on target. MH – to clarify what “Slash 2” means: It refers to situations where follow-up works are required after the initial visit. For example, if the first visit has been completed but the work isn’t up to the required standard, additional tasks need to be raised—that’s what we call it a Slash 2. While there will be cases where extra parts need to be ordered, our goal is to complete as much work as possible during the first visit, provided the necessary parts are available. There will still be instances where ordering</p>	

Item		Action
7.2	<p>parts is unavoidable, but overall, we're aiming to minimise repeat visits and get the job done right the first time.</p> <p><b>KPI015 – Repairs Completed at First Visit</b> – All green, Performance on target.</p> <p><b>KPI016 – Kitchen and Bathroom Refurbishment Orders</b> Completed Within timescale – All green and on target apart from South (Red) 18%. LW - Asha covered many of these points earlier, as I shared the information with her. The main issue comes down to data not transferring correctly from Connect, and some entries not being completed within their Connect system. We've already engaged with Fortem, escalated the matter to their Regional Director, and agreed on a recovery plan to ensure alignment and data accuracy. I also have a presentation from Fortem outlining their strategy to get things back on track. For reassurance, I checked today's figures for November—while we're still reviewing September data, performance has improved to around 50%. This is encouraging progress. The challenge is that Fortem is managing a large program—approximately 2,500 to 3,000 kitchens and bathrooms across the South—using around 12 subcontractors. Despite this complexity, improvements are happening. If Eric or the Tenant Scrutiny Group would like a separate meeting, I can share the report and walk through the details. Alternatively, I can circulate the report after this meeting. If anyone has questions, I'm happy to take them back to Asha. ES – could you please circulate the report after the meeting, thank you.</p> <p><b>AOB</b></p> <p>RL - We're currently in the process of setting up a Disability Focus Group. A draft Terms of Reference has been prepared and is now being reviewed by our Strategy and Equalities Directorate to ensure it meets all requirements. The aim of the group is to include:</p>	
8.0		

Item		Action			
9.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tenants with disabilities</li> <li>• Carers of tenants with disabilities</li> <li>• Wider support networks</li> </ul> <p>Once finalized, we'll send out invitations to join the group through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local Housing Improvement Boards</li> <li>• The Tenant Scrutiny Group</li> <li>• Our tenant newsletter</li> </ul> <p>We expect these communications to go out in the next month or so. AB - I am a disabled tenant. I live in sheltered housing, so I would be interested in joining your new group if that was possible. RL - no problem. Amanda. I'll make a note of that. SD - I'm a disabled person that lives in sheltered accommodation, so I would like to join that group as well. RL - Sheila, OK, excellent. SB - I'm a disabled mental health service user. I live on my own. I don't have any family in Birmingham, and I'd really like to join that group because it is a constant stress trying to negotiate the Council. RL - I've made a note of all of your names, at the point in which we are ready to recruit to the group I'll let you know. FL - Just to say that the group that Richard's talking about setting up, I'm actually involved in it, so I'll keep you all updated as well.</p> <p><b><u>Date of Next Meeting</u></b></p> <p>Monday 9<sup>th</sup> Feb 2026, 10-11.30, TSG Teams Meeting.</p> <p>Please note meeting invites have already been sent.</p> <p><b>2026 Dates</b></p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>9<sup>th</sup> Feb 10-11.30am</td> </tr> <tr> <td>11<sup>th</sup> May 10-11.30am</td> </tr> <tr> <td>7<sup>th</sup> Sept 10-11.30am</td> </tr> </table>	9 <sup>th</sup> Feb 10-11.30am	11 <sup>th</sup> May 10-11.30am	7 <sup>th</sup> Sept 10-11.30am	
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	9 <sup>th</sup> Nov 10-11.30am	