Minutes

Dover District Tenants' Consultative Group Meeting
Tuesday 13th October 2026
11am-1pm
Tracker, DDC

Members
Neil Drakley – Chair of the DDTCG
Bruce Smithard – Tenant representative
Karen Smitton – Tenant Representative
Gordon Cheeseman – Leaseholder Representative
Jenny Cheeseman – Leaseholder Representative
Alan Adams – Tenant Representative
Chris Tough – Leaseholder Representative
Gillian Litton – Tenant Representative

Dover District Council
Cllr Pam Brivio – Portfolio Holder for Housing, Skills and Education
Perry DeSouza – Strategic Housing Manager
Beth Becks – Principal Tenant Engagement and Monitoring Officer
David Parratt – Community Safety, Resilience and Digital Manager
Sharon Egin – Project Coordinator - Digital Services
Beth Mclaughlin-Aldred – Assistant Strategic Housing Officer (minute taker)

Discussion points	Actions
Welcome, Instructions and Apologies No apologies	
Voting Vice-Chair No voting commenced – Patricia Hayward has left the group. Defer till next meeting and vote in January, for a new Vice-Chair to take place.	
Minutes and Actions Minutes agreed.	
Housing Hub – With Sharon Egin and David Parratt Overview of Netcall (CRM) was provided.	

It will be known as Tenant Portal for tenants and Tenant Hub for officers. The portal will provide tenancy information and will enable tenants to make reports. In the portal there will be records of all previous report forms. The portal will be bespoke to DDC and no external contractors are involved. It aims to cut officers workload and has been found to save 8 hours per week of work. Important to note it is not going to take away from other means of communication e.g. telephone calls, staff will also be able to log forms on behalf of tenants if they are not able to use the portal. Introduction of chat bots and a WhatsApp feature to contact DDC will happen in the future. Current systems will not be replaced; they will simply feed into one another. There will be an advisory group set up in the future to gain feedback for the portal. Information regarding each tenancy, such as rent accounts will be able to be viewed. Still in the design phase and information will be included in tenant newsletters and emails to inform tenants of the portal. Long term goal is to provide one log in for all services. Councillors will also be made aware of the portal.	
Waste – Questions answered by Jessica Stroud 1st question - *Do the bins get cleaned in blocks of flats at any time?* - Waste Services are not contracted to clean the bins so that would need to be organised by the Estate Officer. 2nd question - *How do we go about getting rid of waste fluids?* - Depends on what waste fluids it is, cooking oil, engine oil, paint etc to be taken to the Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC). Residents are also encouraged to make full use of any food waste recycling service available to them. The group discussed issues with the HWRC as they do not allow people on foot to enter but they do not have something outside the gate to help dispose of cooking oil etc. 3rd question – *On the Canadian estate, there are issues with the bin area becoming overfilled to quickly and once the bin is full, rubbish is left on the floor, then the bin men will not touch it. How are these issues resolved, how does a community get additional bins?* - Issues should be reported to Estates Officer, residents are provided with 180l of refuse per household and collection crews cannot clear excess rubbish. Reduce overflow by recycling, any additional bins to be reported to Estates Officers.	Beth MA - Invite Jess Stroud and an Estates Officer to the next meeting. Beth MA- Send question responses to Jess and to the estate's officers.

Bruce highlighted that currently there are no recycling bins on the Canadian Estate, so they cannot recycle. The group discussed that contamination is an issue in communal bin stores and discussed whether lockable bin stores are an option.	
Housing Policy and Performance Update - Perry DeSouza • *Annual Report and Quarterly Performance* A report of the monthly figures was given by Perry DeSouza. All safety targets are set at 100% There were discussions around the figures and factors relating to why certain figures are under target, this is mainly due to no access. The group asked whether forced entry is a route that could be taken. They were informed that legally forced entry only applies to gas safety checks, and an updated procedure is being worked on. The new Tenancy Agreement also includes a section on allowing access. The group questioned why gas safety figures are at 100%, but CO and smoke alarm figures are lower when they should get checked at the same time. This will be relayed to Tim Goss. There is an ongoing programme to create combined appointments for stock condition surveys, gas safety checks etc, to make it easier for tenants. Significant progress has been made with overdue repairs, but further work is needed on damp and mould. The figure for 'average number of days to re let a property' currently includes figures of properties which needed major works, which shouldn't be the case Rent collection achieves target. Former tenant arrears are increasing; DDC are one of the best in Kent and are above average nationally for collecting rent. • *Tenancy Strategy Documents for review* Summarised versions were provided of the *Tenancy Strategy* and the *Tenancy and Neighbourhood Strategy*. **The Tenancy Strategy** sets out principles social housing landlords should provide. A new strategy is implemented every 5 years and a consultation with Housing Associations is currently active. The strategy also acts as a guide to Housing Associations who operate in the district. **Tenancy and Neighbourhood Strateg**y sets out the rights and responsibilities as well as the support available for tenants. There is no legal requirement for this policy, but it is beneficial as it aligns with the new Tenancy Agreement and has combined 5 existing policies into 1 to ensure consistency across the departments. Tenancy strategy consultation closes on 2nd November. Questions and comments to be sent before 2nd November. Both strategies to go to cabinet in December. • *Tenant Engagement Strategy* The aim is to review the document by March/ April next year. Resident Scrutiny Group and the DDTCG will be included.	Beth MA – circulate Perry's slides with minutes. Beth MA- Ask Tim Goss about CO and smoke alarm figures. Perry – Provide accurate letting figures for average number of days to re-let a property. Perry – Provide September eviction figure at next meeting. DDTCG – Send questions about Strategies to Perry, Beth B or Beth MA before 2nd of November.

• *TPAS* TPAS have been commissioned to do a smart review and a root cause analysis. The findings from these reviews will be used to inform the Tenant Engagement Strategy. No time scale for the reviews yet. TPAS would like to meet the DDTCG and come along to a meeting. The group praised Perry for his efficiency and in-depth explanations.	
Tenant Engagement Update • *Tenant Survey (TSM) update* Annual survey and the results get sent to the Regulator of Social Housing. Opened in August and closes on 24th of December. Currently just shy of 300 responses. We are underrepresented on tenants from Dover, 3 bed houses and middle aged and younger tenants. Door knocking sessions to take place as well as continued emails and SMS. • *Tenant Communications Update* Monthly email to go out week commencing 12/10/26, which will include TSM update and consultation information. New tenant newsletter to go out just before Christmas via SMS but paper copy is available. The group discussed newsletter article ideas, which included DDTCG and Resident Scrutiny update, the tenant hub, community groups, local Christmas events and a Christmas light competition. • *Inside Housing Conference Update – Bruce Smithard and Beth Mclaughlin-Aldred* The group was informed of the learnings and take aways from the conference, this included how to reach more tenants, how to improve repairs and ASB services, as well as discussions around other engagement events other local authorities and housing associations hold. • *Resident Scrutiny Group Update* The group is up and running. The welcome event and first meeting has` taken place. There is currently 5 members involved. First review will be on housing complaints and the complaints process. Rebecca Brough and Sue Carr will be in attendance at the next Resident Scrutiny meeting.	

Ashford Borough Council would like to do a meet up with DDC Resident Scrutiny Group. Chair of the group is Chris Tough and Vice Chair is Daren Osbourne. WhatsApp group has been created by the members, and a Teams channel is being looked into for the group.	
Forward Plan and AOB • *AOB* Chris Hanagan has resigned from the group. Respects were given from the DDTCG and how much he has done for the group. Carol Hill has also resigned, but she would love to come back once she is better. Neil commented on the external decoration works completed by Bell, and what a good job they are doing. Neil is also a guinea pig for the Mears and Me portal. Mears are also taking Neil out with an operative to look at the processes of getting a void back to a lettable standard. As part of Mears' social value part of the contract, they are looking for suggestions, Neil has suggested giving out Christmas presents to children's homes. Mears to attend the next meeting as they are looking to recruit for a customer advisory board and would like already engaged tenants. Recruitment is not currently open yet. Neil also noted that going forward, in the minutes, he would like the members names to be above the DDC staff names. • *Forward Plan* Karen Jewell (Mears) Jess Stroud and Estates Officer Tenant Hub	
Meeting Close Date of next meeting: – Tuesday 24th November 2026, HMS Brave, DDC Offices	