

# Tenants' Forum

**Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday, 17 June 2025 at 9:30am  
in the Law library, Barrow Town Hall and on Teams**

**Tenant Reps Present:**

**Chair & Street Voice for Raglan Court  
& Corporation Terrace**  
Mandy Anderson

**Street Voice for Roosegate**  
Nicola Bull

**Street Voice for Newton Road Area,  
Dalton**  
David Pearson

**Street Voice for Carleton Meadows,  
Penrith**  
Scott Jackson

**Westmorland and Furness Council:**

Rebecca (Bex) Halton, Senior Manager – Housing  
Landlord & Homelessness Services  
Cllr Judith Derbyshire, Cabinet Member for Housing &  
Homelessness  
Cllr Anne Burns  
Cllr Anita Husband  
Cathy Kirk, Projects Officer (minute taker)

	Agenda Item	Action
1.	<b>Apologies for Absence</b>  Apologies for absence were received from Danny Green, Street Voice for Broughton Road, Dalton;., Caroline Wagstaff, Assistant Director of Housing; Caroline Kendall, Interim Operational Lead Safer and Strong Communities and Debbie Cubiss, Senior Neighbourhood Team Leader.	
2.	<b>Minutes of Previous Meeting held on 2 April 2025</b>  The minutes were agreed as a true and correct record.	
3. 3.1	<b>Matters Arising</b>  <b>Potential Street Voice for Eden area</b>  Bex welcomed Scott who has now officially been appointed as the Street Voice for the Carleton Meadows estate in Penrith.  Scott passed on his thanks to everyone who had made this happen.	
4.	<b>Tenant Participation Compact Budget Update</b>  The budget for 2025/26 has been increased and is now £15k, for information the split is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Cost of living assistance increased £13,600</li><li>• Hospitality increased - £300</li><li>• Community events –£1000</li><li>• Travel – £100</li></ul> Since April, there has been no spend, but the increase in the cost of living assistance budget will enable us to assist more tenants who are struggling financially to purchase basic essential items.	

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<b>5.</b>	<b>Environment Enhancement Budget Update</b>	
<b>5.1</b>	<b>Environmental Enhancement £5k Budget 2025/26</b>  No spend on the budget as yet.  Balance: £5,000	
<b>5.2</b>	<b>Area Improvement £10k Budget 2025/26 (officers' budget)</b>  Nine skips days have been held since April, at a cost of c.£3,000.  Balance: c.£7,000	
<b>6.</b>	<b>Service Update</b>	
<b>6.1</b>	<b>Carleton Meadows Properties</b>  Bex advised the final tranche of six properties at Carleton Meadows have now been handed over to the Council, bringing the total number of properties to 81.	
<b>6.2</b>	<b>Collection of Water Rates</b>  We currently collect water charges on behalf of United Utilities for Barrow tenants and receive commission for doing so. With the contract with United Utilities up for renewal next year Bex is looking into whether this should be renewed. A lot of standing debt on tenants' accounts is due to waters rates as we can't take formal action to recover this.  She will be looking to assess the value to us in continuing to collect these charges, taking into account officers' time in trying to recover these charges and the impact it has on arrears figures.  United Utilities have also changed the process to access lower water tariffs, which is making it harder to support tenants. Whereas previously it would take an officer about 10 minutes to submit a claim on behalf of the tenant, the process is now a lot more complicated and requires tenants to be present with the officer (tenants can't do it themselves) and it now requires a full check of income and expenditure and medical information, which takes at least 50 minutes to do.  Cllr Burns wondered if this could go on the agenda for Scrutiny Group and involvement of Poverty Truth Commission was also mentioned.  Bex will be preparing a report on this and will keep the group updated.  11am Judith Derbyshire left for another pre-arranged meeting.	
<b>7.</b>	<b>Tenant Satisfaction Measures</b>  Every year we are required by the Regulator of Social Housing to report our performance on 22 tenancy satisfaction measures: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 12 tenant perception measures – measured via Tenant Perception Survey</li> <li>• 10 general management measures - measured via data on our systems and repair contactors</li> </ul>	

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	<p>The return is due next Monday. Once the information has been uploaded to our website a link will be sent to Tenants' Forum.</p> <p>Out of the 12 tenant perception measures, there has been improvement in 9 of them and there was also an increased response rate, which is positive.</p> <p>Interestingly, whilst tenant satisfaction around repairs has dropped around 2% (but still up in the late 70%s), the actual management information shows a significant improvement in the response times to repairs. So the satisfaction response must be down to something other than response time. Getting ready to look at a new repairs contract in next 12 – 18 months so will be looking to set up a Tenant Compact Scrutiny type group where this will be explored further with tenants.</p> <p>The only figure that looks a little off (80%) for the Legionella checks, because we've only nine properties there is one property that refuses access – and there is no legal right for us to gain entry for these checks.</p> <p>On the whole, the results are positive.</p>	Cathy
8.	<p><b>Complaints</b></p> <p><b>Complaints</b></p> <p>In the last quarter there were four complaints (two ASB and two repairs), one of which was a stage 2. It was a complicated case around anti-social behaviour with the complainant turning out to be the perpetrator and not the victim - with the original decision being upheld.</p> <p>For the year 2024/25 there were 18 complaints in total.</p> <p>David Pearson raised issue of rats in a neighbouring rear garden and problem with rubbish/plastic being burnt in another garden Cathy will pass details over to Safe &amp; Strong Team.</p> <p>Nicola raised issue of bed/furniture in front garden at Longway – Cathy will pass details over to Safe and Strong Team.</p> <p>Mandy raised issue of persistent problem with rubbish in Raglan Court bin store areas. Advised the Safe &amp; Strong Team are aware of the problems being caused by one particular family.</p> <p>Post meeting note: These issues have been flagged with the Safe &amp; Strong Team for appropriate action.</p>	<p>Cathy/SST</p> <p>Cathy/SST</p> <p>Cathy/SST</p>
9.	<p><b>Any Other Business</b></p> <p><b>9.1 Grass Cutting Contract</b></p> <p>Bex advised Continental Landscapes has been taken over and in the process the contract ended and the extension wasn't activated. Until a new contract is procured, work is ongoing to secure an interim arrangement to cover the next four months.</p>	

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	<p>In the meantime, tenants are being asked to bear with us and if they have no family or friends that can help out, requests for grass cutting are being considered on a health and safety basis only if it's impacting on access in and out of the property – a couple of our Mobile Caretaking Operatives are trained to trim.</p>	
9.2	<p><b>Area in front of Mill Lane Shops</b></p> <p>Cllr Husband raised issue of weeds and a large tree on the shop parade at Mill Lane.</p> <p>Bex advised the issue of weeds generally is on Caroline Kendall's radar and discussions are being held looking at eco friendly ways of getting rid of them.</p> <p>Senior surveyor, Bryan Walker, will be asked to have a look at the area and take appropriate action.</p> <p>Post meeting note: Bryan Walker, attended and the tree is not on housing land so this may need to be raised with another service area.</p>	Cathy/Bryan
9.3	<p><b>Boundary fencing</b></p> <p>Nicola asked for clarification on the policy of fencing.</p> <p>Bex advised if the fence is at the rear of a property and it backs on to highway, then it is our responsibility.</p> <p>If it is a boundary fence between properties, it is the responsibility of the tenants and this is stated clearly in the tenancy agreement.</p> <p>Nicola advised of a young single mother with a young daughter who is terrified of using the garden due to there being no boundary fencing and the neighbouring tenant's large dog.</p> <p>Bex asked Nicola to gather all the details together and contact the Safe &amp; Strong Team requesting they look into it – there would have to be very strong grounds but it could potentially be considered as a hardship case and funded from one of the budgets, but we would not want to set a precedent.</p>	Nicola
9.4	<p><b>Vulcan Playground</b></p> <p>Mandy raised concerns about the condition of the play area on Vulcan – the felt is lifting and roots of a tree are lifting a fence. Mandy was advised to contact Maria Green (Recreation &amp; Leisure Officer).</p> <p>Post meeting note: Paul Johns, Operational Services Monitoring Officer, responded to the enquiry: Playgrounds are checked weekly and any defects logged. There are several lower scoring defects being monitored on this playground and will be repaired asap. Any damage to the wet pour is marked down for repair. Will ask the Arborist Team to check the tree when they are next in Barrow.</p>	Mandy
9.5	<p><b>Roosegate Community Centre</b></p> <p>The issue of Roosegate Community Centre was raised again and the group discussed various concerns.</p> <p>It was agreed Cllr Burns will, in the first instance speak to ward councillor, Andy Coles.</p>	Cllr Burns

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10.	<p><b>Date of Next Meeting</b></p> <p>The date of the next meeting is Thursday, 28 August 2025 at 10am in the Law Library &amp; via Teams, (date may be moved due to school holidays).</p>	