

Minutes

Date: 29 April 2026

Meeting : **Housing Operations Committee**

Present : Pam Norton, Board Member
Annette Dunningham, Board Member
Barbara Bransgrove, Board Member
Anne Brown, Resident Member
Betty Brock, Resident Member
David Brigden, Resident Member
Peter Burdon, Resident Member

In attendance : Robin Roberts, Chief Executive
Glynis Gatenby, Operations Director
Celia Dawes, Executive Support

Item:

Action:

1 Apologies for absence / declarations of interest

1.1 Apologies for absence were received from Jean Gardner and John Vine, Resident Members.

1.2 There were no declarations of interest.

1.3 The meeting was quorate.

2 Minutes of the Housing Operations meeting held on 28 January 2026:

2.1 Pam Norton asked if anyone had any corrections or comments on the minutes of the meeting held on 28 January 2026. There were none.

2.2 The minutes were agreed to be an accurate record and were approved.

3 Actions from last meeting

3.1 Agenda item 7.2.6 – contact with residents: Glynis Gatenby confirmed that the pilot for six-monthly contact with residents (as opposed to 12-monthly contact) had commenced this month and

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was being monitored. We are awaiting an update on any impact this has had and will report at a later date.

3.2 All other actions had been completed.

4 Performance measures (quarter 4 year-end, 2025 / 2026)

4.1 Glynis Gatenby introduced the report which reviews performance measure results to the end of quarter 4, year-end 2025 / 26.

4.2 Glynis Gatenby confirmed that the TSM (tenant satisfaction measures) perception survey responses will remain the same for two years. The management data results will be updated annually.

4.3 Glynis Gatenby referred to the complaints received TSM result – the calculation has been done per 100 properties whereas the Government requests this per 1000 properties which would show a disproportionate percentage due to our size. The report shows the actual number of complaints received, 13 in total, 10 to stage one and three to stage 3. Robin Roberts commented that there was no logic to how this was calculated to which Glynis Gatenby agreed, stating that it is the same with our anti-social behaviour calculation.

4.4 The report also shows the percentage of homes not meeting the Decent Homes Standard incorrectly at 100%. This should read 0% (we reported on how many homes **do** meet the standard which is 100%, rather than do not meet the standard).

4.5 *Our resources:*

- relet times, across all our homes, is sadly well above our target at 35.5 days. Item 4.1 of the report states the reasons for this result. Half of the voids for 2025 / 2026 were in quarter 4 of the financial year. Although the properties were ready to let, there were issues with the information received from the Council for their nominations; incorrect contact details, nominees did not engage when contacted and some were not ready to move so refused the property. Our Housing Services Manager is meeting with the Council to discuss these issues
- rent arrears currently stand at 1.89% for general needs homes and 0.9% for older people homes
- appendix 3 lists the cases of arrears over £1,000. The highest arrears case is just over £5k, a one-bedroom flat in an older people's scheme. Pam Norton asked if the second case will be a write off. Glynis Gatenby confirmed that we will approach the fraud team at LBS to request contact information but if this is not provided, it will become a write-off. All other cases are being managed by the team

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4.6

Our communities:

- for the first time we have reached 70% of our older peoples housing residents using digital platforms
- we have 1300 followers on our social media accounts
- nine service requests and one complaint were received during quarter four which are listed at item 5.4. The complaints report which is presented to Board is almost complete and will be shared with HOC in July
- we received 138 compliments throughout the year

4.7

Our residents:

- there are three active anti-social behaviour cases covering all types of housing we provide

4.8

Our homes:

- repair results are good with emergency repairs completed on time at 100% and non-emergency repairs at 99.3%
- gas and compliance with the Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarm (Amendment) Regulations 2022 guidance remains 100% compliant for homes with a valid gas safety certificate
- gas safety checks within target shows as “red” due to three properties being late in having their gas safety inspections completed; one due to no response from the resident, one due to access refusal despite three appointments being made and one due to the contractor over-running at a previous job so the appointment was rearranged
- legionella testing and electrical safety remain at 100% compliant
- lift out of action (routine measure) has increased to 214 days mainly due to several breakdowns in quick succession at Trickett House (which were quickly fixed) and a breakdown at Old Brewery House which required a replacement part. Unfortunately, we were caught by the new procurement rules which has caused a delay in the replacement of the lifts at Thomas House and Old Brewery House, but a contractor is now in place and we are awaiting a further costing. There is a 16 week lead-in period so the start date will be August at the earliest
- we have one home without an EPC certificate and have carried out further work which has reduced the number of homes with an EPC rating of D from 9.3% to 5.9%. 94% of homes now have an EPC rating of C or above
- The 2025/26 FRAs are complete with 39 medium and 1 low rated actions outstanding – all works are on order
- there were four reports of damp and mould received in March – all have been addressed. The family from Wandle Valley who are living in overcrowded conditions was turned down for their

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mutual exchange by the receiving landlord because they would still be considered overcrowded in the new home

4.9

Our people:

- employees have carried out 317 hours of training during the financial year
- the competence and conduct standard is being introduced from October 2026. We will receive support from Campbell Tickell to ensure we meet the requirements

4.10

Pam Norton asked when reporting on the new Ofgem metrics regarding communal boilers would start. Glynis Gatenby replied that this would be reported quarterly once the Ofgem system was up and running and confirmed that we had volunteered to take part in the pilot for the Ofgem digital IT system for recording the metrics, and are hoping to be in a position to supply an update in July.

4.11

Pam Norton asked how the residents at Thomas House and Old Brewery House were coping with the lift issue and were they aware of the situation. Glynis Gatenby confirmed that a letter was sent to all residents at these schemes last week. It has been decided that the lift at Old Brewery House would be replaced first due to having the most breakdowns. Assistance is offered when needed.

4.12

Pam Norton asked if there were any questions or comments. There were none.

4.13

The Housing Operations Committee agreed to:

- i) note the performance for quarter 4, year-end 2025 / 2026 including TSM results**
- ii) note the arrears cases exceeding £1,000**

5**Operational update**

5.1

Glynis Gatenby introduced the report which updates Members on the operational work undertaken since the last meeting, reviews progress with the single equalities scheme 2025 / 2026 and seeks approval for the 2026 / 2027 single equalities scheme.

5.2

Glynis Gatenby highlighted the following:

5.2.1

Community engagement:

5.2.1.1

In quarter 4 there were 45 opportunities for residents to be involved, with 808 attendees.

5.2.1.2

We have recently carried out a survey regarding our community engagement offer and received a satisfaction response of 91% which is excellent. There were no dissatisfied responses. Eight

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residents gave a neutral satisfaction response. This will form the basis of the report which goes to Board.

- 5.2.1.3 Annette Dunningham stated that some residents still work and are unable to attend the events. Glynis Gatenby replied that she had noted all the comments and will see what can be put in place to accommodate them. Annette Dunningham suggested something every couple of months would be good.
- 5.2.1.4 InCommon, the group involved in our intergenerational projects, have recently taken the decision to close the organisation following the loss of two sources of core funding. They have given us their resources and contacts and the two primary schools we currently work with are keen to continue so hopefully we will start these sessions up again in September. IT sessions were also mentioned several times in the survey, and this is something we had spoken about with InCommon – it is hoped that we may be able to progress this with their contacts.
- 5.2.2 Cloverdale Court:
Lynn Goodman, our Housing with Care manager at Cloverdale Court, along with the manager of the day centre, voluntarily set up a monthly Saturday morning tea and natter group. This was well received and is being promoted at our schemes.
- 5.2.3 The (wider) Sutton Housing Society Team:
Stacey Smither-Moore has left the organisation to focus on her young family. Marcie Regelous, our Resources Director, is retiring at the end of June after nearly 30 years. Michelle Easton, our Management Accountant, will be stepping up as Finance Director which in time will transition to Resources Director. Daisy Bushby will take up the position of Management Accountant, a role she covered during Michelle's maternity leave.
- 5.2.4 The residents' charter group:
The residents' charter group will next meet in May. In February they held an extra meeting to review the TSM survey results.
- 5.2.5 The gardening competition:
The gardening competition will not be held this year due to on-going development works at Trickett House and works at other schemes such as Robertson House and Peppermint Court.
- 5.2.6 Handyperson service:
 - 5.2.6.1 Following a request for an update on the Handyman service made at the January HOC meeting, Glynis Gatenby confirmed that 30 jobs had been carried out during the last financial year at 14 different sites across all housing types. The cost of this work, which is borne

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by SHS, is £4k (£131.14 per job). Residents are aware of the scheme and appreciate its availability.

- 5.2.6.2 Annette Dunningham offered her compliments to Kelvin (Boston and Smee) saying that he was quick to respond to a recent incident with smoke alarms during out of hours. She added that he does a lot for the residents. Annette Dunningham was assured this would be passed on.

5.2.7 Development:

Robin Roberts provided the following highlights from the report:

- Trickett House scaffolding is currently being erected and should be finished shortly. This is a 25-month contract with the rear block due for completion around December 2026, followed by works to the front block
- Wandle Valley – planning permission granted. These will remain ‘land banked’ for future development of general needs properties
- Robertson House (airspace and side extension with new entrance) – planning permission has been granted
- Peppermint Court (two new flats) – planning and scheme approval achieved
- Griffiths Close development will follow on from completion of Trickett House

5.2.8 Planned maintenance programme 2025 / 2026:

The planned maintenance programme for last year is all but complete. The new programme will be reported on from July 2026
The telecare project moving our telecare analogue systems to digital has been successfully completed.

5.2.9 Pests:

- 5.2.9.1 During 2025 / 2026, we had an infestation of bed bugs at Griffiths Close. By the time they were discovered, they had already spread through areas at the scheme and took several months to get under control and eradicate.

- 5.2.9.2 We have now found bed bugs at Cloverdale Court, initially in one property but within a week they were found in two others. Steps have been taken to control the spread and eradicate them but this will take some time with several treatments required from pest control.

- 5.2.9.3 As a result of these infestations, we will introduce a new pest policy which will be brought to the July meeting for approval.

Item:**Action:****5.2.10 Single equalities scheme:**

5.2.10.1 The single equalities scheme provides our commitment to equality, ensuring fair services. Appendix 1 is the scheme for 2025 / 2026. The key actions were the equality assessments carried out by the Development Officer as residents move or needs change. The residents' charter group also carried out a review of repairs / damp / mould to ensure people from BME backgrounds were not more prevalent to these issues – there were no areas of concern.

5.2.10.2 The single equalities scheme for 2026 / 2027 is attached at appendix 2.

5.3 Pam Norton thanked Glynis Gatenby for the report and asked if there were any further questions or comments – there were none.

5.4 The Housing Operations Committee agreed to:

- i) **note the contents of the report**
- ii) **note the progress with the 2025 / 2026 single equalities scheme**
- iii) **approve the 2026 / 2027 single equalities scheme**

6 Safeguarding summary 2025 / 2026

6.1 Glynis Gatenby introduced the report which provides a summary of the safeguarding work carried out during the financial year 2025 / 2026.

6.2 Glynis Gatenby reiterated that we have a legal responsibility to report any safeguarding concerns relating to our residents to the local authority for investigation and / or review. We have no responsibility to investigate ourselves.

6.3 Most frontline and office-based employees are required to undertake a safeguarding adults awareness course. Some employees, depending on their role, also undertake safeguarding children training.

6.4 There were nine safeguarding alerts raised during 2025 / 2026 which related to seven individuals. These covered neglect (not receiving basic needs, isolation, not receiving medication etc) and self-neglect (refusing to eat, no personal care etc).

6.5 The local authority has closed all but one case. The standard the Council applies for what they will investigate is getting higher so some of what we report is not being investigated and more is being pushed back on landlords.

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- 6.6 The table included at item 6.1 sets out the ethnicity of the individuals – this usually shows a mix but for the first time it shows all to be white British.
- 6.7 Pam Norton questioned the meaning of the Council ‘pushing back on landlords’. Glynis Gatenby explained that previously, we would put cases we felt met the threshold for investigation forward but now find these are not investigated and the housing managers are having to monitor more cases. Pam Norton responded to say that as long as we have reported the cases and have everything in place that should suffice. Glynis Gatenby agreed stating that if there was an investigation into, say, a death, we would have to evidence that we have done all we are required to do.
- 6.8 Pam Norton thanked Glynis Gatenby for the report, stating that it is good to know that everything is being followed as well as it is as far as we are concerned. She asked if there were any further questions – there were none.
- 6.9 The Housing Operations Committee agreed to:**
i) note the contents of the report

7 Voids and lettings summary

- 7.1 Glynis Gatenby introduced the report which summarises the voids and lettings work during the 2025 / 2026 financial year.
- 7.2 Forty homes became vacant across the period with almost 50% becoming vacant in the last quarter. Sadly, the main reason for a property becoming vacant is the resident passing away (19 / 52.2%). Others became vacant due to the resident moving into care (8 / 20%), residents moving into their own accommodation (4 / 10%) or other reasons.
- 7.3 There were 26 lettings during 2025 / 2026, 16 in housing for older people, eight in housing with care and two in general needs housing. All housing with care and general needs residents are nominated by the local authority.
- 7.4 In total we had 15 new residents via the local authority and 11 came from our direct waiting list. Our waiting list is currently closed and will be reviewed in August.
- 7.5 The homes let were evenly balanced in terms of gender with 14 female and 12 male new residents. Five (19%) of the 26 lettings were to people from black and minority ethnic (BME) origin and / or non-British which is below Sutton’s figures (41% of the population of Sutton are from BME communities) but housing is based on need not background.

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- 7.6 The majority of new residents are retired (46%) and 27% are unable to work due to long-term sickness or disability with 17% of those housed in our older people's accommodation still working, including part-time hours.
- 7.7 Of the 26 lettings, seven (27%) needed more than one offer before being let with two studio flats only being successfully let after 11 and 9 offers. Two small one-bedroom flats that were previously studios were let on their 2nd and 4th offers.
- 7.8 We received three compliments for our lettings service, with no complaints.
- 7.9 We envisage that lettings for the new flats at Trickett House will take place end January / early February 2027. Annette Dunningham asked what we would do if the decanted residents do not want to go back to Trickett House. Glynis Gatenby responded to say they have to move back to their home. If the contractor overruns, we can potentially consider a permanent move to the decanted home. If we allow people to stay where they have been decanted to, without a good reason, they could be seen as having 'jumped the queue' to get alternative accommodation. Their tenancy remains with their original home, and the decanted (temporary) home is let on licence so is not covered by the same tenancy protections. Robin Roberts added that we have had one previous resident who was allowed to stay in the temporary home due to delays in the completion of the contract.
- 7.10 Pam Norton thanked Glynis Gatenby for the report and asked if there were any comments or further questions – there were none.
- 7.11 **The Housing Operations Committee agreed to:**
i) **note the contents of the report**

8 Policies for approval

- 8.1 Glynis Gatenby informed Members that three policies have been brought before them for approval. An overview of each policy was given.
- 8.2 **Managing unacceptable behaviour:**
This is a new policy which was approved for use last year. The committee asked that it be brought back after having been used for a while. In the last year, several residents have received warnings of potential sanctions due to their abusive language and / or threatening behaviour but it has not been necessary to make any formal sanctions as outlined in the policy. We consider it

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acceptable to continue to use the policy as it stands and will review its use annually with the committee.

8.3

Complaints:

The complaints policy is reviewed regularly, most recently in 2025. The Housing Ombudsman has introduced new compensation guidance which means we needed to update our policy in line with regulatory requirements. We have also included a section on vexatious / persistent complainants.

8.4

Compensation and other payments:

Our compensation and other payments policy has been updated in line with the Housing Ombudsman changes. We have included a section on compensation paid via service charges for communal services (where the refund is calculated and applied to the following year's service charge).

8.4.1

Annette Dunningham referred to the compensation paid for no heating at £2.00 per day. Although an electric heater is supplied as an alternative, the costs to run it are high. Glynis Gatenby responded that these are standard figures. We would know when heating had been off for a length of time and would be fair and compare the resident's electric bills and cover the cost of the electricity for the use of the heater.

8.5

Pam Norton thanked Glynis Gatenby for highlighting the changes in the policies in red font which makes them easier to identify. She also expressed that she was pleased to see vexatious complainants included in the policy.

8.6

There were no further comments or questions.

8.7

The Housing Operations Committee agreed to:

- i) approve the Managing unacceptable behaviour policy**
- ii) approve the Complaints policy**
- iii) approve the Compensation and other payments policy**

9**Any other business**

9.1

Peter Burdon raised a recent incident at Trickett House and said he would like to see a policy where Sutton Housing Society maintains closer contact with residents. Glynis Gatenby responded to confirm details that we do already have procedures in place regarding contact with residents, which has recently been reviewed regarding length of time and was being monitored. She added that we receive requests for welfare checks from family / friends of our residents and these are carried out. Annette Dunningham agreed, stating that the staff go above and beyond, the teams care and do a good job, checks are carried out.

Item:

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Date of next meeting: 29 July 2026 at 5.30pm