

Minutes



Dover District Tenants' Consultative Group Meeting

22 April 2025

11am-1pm

Council Chamber, DDC

Present:

DDTCG

Neil Drakley, Chair

K [REDACTED] S [REDACTED], Tenant

C [REDACTED] H [REDACTED], Tenant

DDC

Beth Becks, Tenant Engagement and Continuous Improvement Officer (minute taker)

Tim Goss, Principal Asset Manager (Item 5)

Will Newman, Systems Officer (Assets) (Item 5)

Suzy Tigwell, Continuous Improvement Officer (Item 4)

Apologies

Perry DeSouza, Strategic Housing Manager

Cllr Pamela Brivo, Portfolio Holder for Housing, Education and Skills

Trisha Hayward, Vice Chair

C [REDACTED], Leaseholder

G [REDACTED], Tenant

C [REDACTED], Tenant

S [REDACTED], Tenant

A [REDACTED], Tenant

B [REDACTED], Tenant

1	<u>Welcome, Introductions and Apologies</u> Many apologies received for different reasons. Low turnout, but quorum achieved. Apologies include, Perry Desouza, Cllr Brivo, Trisha Hayward, [REDACTED]	
2	<u>Minutes and Actions</u> Remove Neil from apologies. Chris stated that he felt that the minutes don't show all of tenants input, Beth explained that this happens when the minute taker has to speak in lots of agenda items. Minutes agreed.	

3	<p>Neil was invited to a mobilisation training session with Mears operatives. Neil stated that it was a very good meeting which ironed out a lot of things and helped launch the contract. Lots of Mears operatives attended.</p> <p>1st contract meeting will be today at 1pm and Neil is attending. Thankful to be given the opportunity. DDTG discussed putting together a press release or article after 1 year into the contract to show the tenant impact.</p>	
4	<p><u>Local Government Reorganisation update</u></p> <p>Suzy was invited to attend to give an update into the upcoming local government reorganisation which is expected to happen in 2028 or 2029.</p> <p>Local government reorganisation is a project instructed by central government and the current administration to restructure all District/County Councils in England to become larger unitary Councils. Unitary Councils are combined services of County and District, like Medway currently is. One the reorganisation has happened; the government has promised a devolution of power and finances from current central government departments to Mayoral authorities. This should give greater financial control over to communities such as Kent.</p> <p>Suzy showed in her presentation the timeline and explained the potential proposals – see presentation slides.</p> <p>DDCs preferred option is for there to be a combination of the current 4 or 5 Councils in an East Kent Council which would include Council such as Canterbury, Thanet, Dover, Ashford and F&HDC but many other variables are possible.</p> <p>Suzy is the Continuous Improvement Manager, with many years' experience in local government having worked at DDC twice previously. She also worked at Folkestone and Hythe DC for a period when the 5 Council merger was brought forward and then scrapped in 2017. Whilst Suzy's role is more general improvement projects for DDC, she is the right person to help DDC to manage the workload involved in this project.</p> <p>C■■ H■■■ asked if DDC was given an option to be involved but Suzy explained that the government told them they were 'expected to'. Suzy went on to say that whilst this change has been thrust upon DDC and there will be a lot of work involved, it's important to understand the reasons why the government want to reorganise local government and that's to create better functioning services and try to sort out the crisis of so many Council's going bust. DDC is in a relatively good financial position but KCC is not. DDC believe that done well, we could see positive improvements, especially in current KCC services, but these won't be seen or felt for years to come.</p> <p>Neil asked if there would be job losses, and Suzy said that yes there certainly would be job losses in senior management positions, as they will be going from multiple management teams down to just 1 management team but many of the people in these roles would be seeking to retire in this</p>	

	<p>timeframe so there aren't many losers because they have a few years to plan ahead. It is expected that many others might choose to leave if they are unhappy about the changes, but Suzy said that isn't a concern as we want to retain staff that are forward thinking, innovative and want to improve services.</p> <p>There will not be any job losses in the short term and there will likely be job creation as councils manage the changes. Some departments might be merged and restructured but all services need to continue as normal so the jobs will be very necessary.</p> <p>Chris asked if the government would be finding this, and Suzy clarified that at the moment, we have not been informed of any funding other than paying for an independent external contractor to complete a thorough assessment and analyse the boundary options for the new Council.</p> <p>It was asked what the impact would be on contracts that the Councils have. Suzy explained that contracts will likely continue due to the legal and financial ramifications, however when reproced, there will be an opportunity to retender for larger areas or keep smaller areas. The main change to start with will be the name and branding. Services and contracts will align over time.</p>	
5	<p><u>Planned Maintenance Programme/ Stock Condition Surveys</u></p> <p><i>Swapped to before Garden Competition item as Tim and Will arrived early.</i></p> <p>Tim Goss/ Will Newman jointed the meeting and Will Newman was introduced. Will is the Strategic Systems & Performance Officer for the Housing Asset team.</p> <p>Will explained that he is automating a lot of insight and data. Having data readily available helps inform service delivery, decision making and contract management. Tim agreed that it's making a huge different to how quickly they can access the data that they need to use.</p> <p>Will showcased his dashboard which includes a large amount of live repair and stock condition data, all within the same document with multiple tabs and views for different elements.</p> <p>C■■■ asked what a HHSRS is. HHSRS is a Heath and safety rating system of multiple factors with formulas to identify hazard/harm and assess building safety.</p> <p>There will always be a risk, even if there is nothing wrong as it's very comprehensive.</p> <p>Stock condition surveys (SCS). There have been 2206 surveys completed so far, with now 50% completed.</p> <p>DDTCG tenants expressed positive experiences with their own SCSs.</p> <p>All SCSs must be verified by DDC staff, so we don't have to do a full survey again, just rechecking the elements.</p> <p>Contractors will give us weekly updates, which gets added to the dashboard.</p> <p>Severe risks get actioned immediately.</p>	

	<p>Damp and mould comes through weekly and DDC will write to them to arrange an appointment. We have very few tenants reporting damp and mould, but lots are coming from the SCS.</p> <p>Beth asked the tenants why they think this is, Chris mentioned that they might think it's their responsibility to deal with and Neil said that tenants might feel embarrassed to have damp/mould and might be cleaning it off themselves.</p> <p>Beth said that we will be mentioning damp and mould in the upcoming newsletter to ensure tenants are aware how to get support and how to report it.</p> <p>What if scenario will ensure that if roofs aren't needed, the budget will be moved to kitchens for example, using the data to ensure the best outcome. It will help move money across projects to suit the requirements and ensure budgets are smoothed out.</p> <p>Planned improvements will be using capital expenditure.</p> <p>C■■■ asked if money will be carried over if needed. Tim stated that that's his team's performance indicator, about how well they've planned their spend and how well they've manage contractors.</p> <p>The SCS is showing that some elements will expire at different times and some years there will be less spend and some more. This will be levelled out and dates will be moved to ensure there aren't so many peaks and troughs,</p> <p>Expected expenditure will be smoothed out.</p> <p>Responsive repairs – we can now track Mears performance based on our data and not Mears data.</p> <p>We can break it down into trade which breaks down to spend and types of jobs raised.</p> <p>This will help DDC analyse demand, which helps predict resources.</p> <p>It also records the average completion time for each trade, this helps DDC monitor the quality of the contract. DDC can look at the really slow completion times and work out how these can be improved</p> <p>Data is taken directly from Northgate and is live.</p> <p>Being able to analyse and monitor more effectively, this will enable DDC to keep a closer eye, and also identify if there are targets that might be unachievable and determine what is in the control of DDC.</p>	
6	<p><u>Garden Competition – Setting criteria and agreeing methods</u></p> <p>No change from last year in terms of judging. Advertising to take place in Keep Me Posted, online and on Facebook.</p> <p>Ideally judging to take place in late June, early July but is dependent on Beth's busy workload.</p> <p>Beth to update the DDT CG when further information is confirmed about timescales and proposed judging meeting.</p>	Beth Becks
7	<p><u>Resident Engagement Update</u></p> <p>DDTCG Date changes</p>	

<p>Beth asked the group if it would be okay to change the upcoming meetings to avoid staffing conflicts at DDC. The following changes are proposed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15 July 2025 to 22nd July 2025 (date moved by 1 week) • 26 August 2025 to 2nd September 2025 (date moved by 1 week) <p>The DDTCG kindly agreed for these dates to be moved to ensure the group can be supported by DDC.</p> <p>TSMs</p> <p>Beth showed the group what FHDC sent out in our last meeting. Still waiting for Thanet's results which are expected in the summer.</p> <p>DDCs results are better than all the local councils and DDC will be writing an article about this in the upcoming Newsletter.</p> <p>We were thinking about removing the Prize draw and instead give out free things at events such as ice creams per survey returned?</p> <p>DDTCG asked to add a quote from prize winners?</p> <p>Scrutiny Panel</p> <p>We still want to be setting up some scrutiny task and finish groups. Beth is pushed for time with the TSM survey, Garden Competition, Newsletter, Annual Report and Handbook projects but is keen to do a full scrutiny review to boost scrutiny supported by the council.</p> <p>Estate Events</p> <p>The events this year will be held at the following dates and locations, DDCTG tenants are very welcome to come along:</p> <p><u>Aylesham Event</u> Wednesday 13th August, 10-12pm Location: Market Place, Aylesham, CT3 3EY (Subject to Parish Council Approval)</p> <p><u>Deal Event</u> Wednesday 20th August, 10-12pm Location: Green in front of Tudor House, Birdwood Avenue, Deal, CT14 9RX</p> <p><u>Dover Event</u> Wednesday 27th August, 1pm-3pm - Aycliffe, Dover Location: Green on St Patricks Road, Aycliffe, Dover CT17 9HE</p> <p>Newsletter Update</p> <p>Newsletter articles include so far:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact details – with new contractors • Mears Mobilisation Update • Estate Walkabout update (progress and advertising) • Annual report link • Tenancy Fraud Awareness • Damp and mould advice • Recycling education 	
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy Page • Your Money Matters (money and rent advice) • Cookery at St Radigunds centre. – add to newsletter from DDTCCG • Litter picking – On Estates? <p>Annual Report</p> <p>Collating the data for production of the Annual report. DDTCCG will get the opportunity to scrutinise the performance.</p> <p>Tenant Handbook</p> <p>Beth is writing the Tenant Handbook and will get tenants involved in this once the majority of the wording is put together. Tenants will be able to have their say on what it looks like, how it's published and what's included.</p> <p>Keep me posted</p> <p>1,030 current subscribers Mears Press release – 46% open rate</p> <p>Inside Housing Conference 15th May 2025</p> <p>We have 2 tenant spaces at the Inside Housing Conference in Central London on Thursday 15th May, 8.15am-4.35pm. Breakfast, lunch, tickets and train journeys will be paid for tenants attending and there should be no cost to the tenants. Who should attend? We need back ups as well as attendees. Neil Drakley, C■■■ H■■■■■■■■, C■■■ T■■■■ and C■■■ B■■■■y have expressed interest in attending with Jodi and Beth.</p> <p>C■■■ H■■■■■■■■ – if cost of Kennels are covered.</p>	
8	<p>Forward plan</p> <p>CEO Nadeem Aziz to be invited to attend when an update to the local government reorganisation in November 2025.</p>	
9	<p>Meeting Close</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Date of next meeting: 03 June 2025 - Council Chamber, DDC 	

Please note: a short comfort break will be included halfway through the meeting.