

Repairs and Maintenance Group meeting

Minutes

Date	Monday, 19 January 2026
Time	11am – 12.30pm
Location	Magna Carta Room Civic Centre, Station Road, Addlestone, KT15 2AH

Attendees:

- Maggie Ward – Corporate Head of Housing (RBC)
- Angela Horsey – Business Development and Policy Manager (RBC)
- Andrea Norman-Walker – Engagement and Inclusion Officer (RBC)
- Tenants

Agenda

I. Welcome and feedback from the previous meeting

Andrea welcomed all new residents who joined the Group and invited them to introduce themselves. She provided feedback on issues raised previously and reminded members to send comments on the Void Standard Policy that had been circulated for consultation before Christmas.

II. Housing plans for 2026

Maggie Ward presented the following updates:

1. Visit of the Regulator for Social Housing

- The Regulator’s inspection is evidence-based; proof must be provided that both consumer and financial standards are met. Ratings range from 1 (best) to 4 (failure).
- Gaps in our services have been identified, and work has begun to address them.
- The Regulator’s judgement - rating plus explanation - was expected by 19 December but has been postponed, with a request for further information.
- An improvement plan has been prepared alongside the inspection process.
- The inspection is transparent and aims to establish RBC’s current position and identify areas for improvement.

One of the residents observed that it seems to be a very procedural process.

2. Local Government Re-organisation (LGR)

- Two joint committees have been established to work on the implementation plan.
- Elections are scheduled for May 2026,
- Following the elections a Shadow Authority will be formed. Complex workstreams will be disaggregated and then divided between East and West Surrey Councils.
- The final step will be to determine responsibilities and leadership.
- The process will be lengthy and challenging, and outwardly April 2027 may look similar to the current set-up.
- Four Housing Services will be amalgamated, covering 16,000 homes. Service locations are yet to be decided. The aim is to create more efficient providers and achieve savings which will result in some office closures.

3. Tenant Satisfaction Measures

- The Annual Satisfaction Survey was closed on 18 January 2026 with 504 responses - only 18% of tenants. The low response rate indicates a need to encourage greater participation.
- Various engagement groups are in place, and support has been provided to residents to establish a scrutiny panel.

4. Priorities – improving our services

- Additional resource needs have been identified, and new posts are being created.
- A Knowledge Information Management Strategy has been developed to gather and use tenant information to provide more tailored services.
- Work is underway to establish a Customer Experience Panel to scrutinise services and make recommendations.
- The new stock condition survey will provide clear information on areas requiring improvement.
- The Asset Management Plan is being reviewed to determine priorities for the next five years.

5. Communications with tenants

- Issues have been noted regarding contractor appointments—missed appointments or contractors arriving without notice. Tenants are encouraged to report these incidents. “Cold calls” may occur when contractors require access and previous communication attempts have failed.
- For planned upgrades, tenants receive an initial letter introducing the contractor and outlining the planned work. A second letter provides an appointment date and contact details for rescheduling.
- Stock condition surveys operate on tight schedules, and lack of access can cause significant delays.
- Runnymede’s small size means insufficient volume of work in some areas to justify full-time specialist contractors. MCP struggled with void property works, so additional contractors have been engaged to reduce pressure, improve void turnaround times, and enhance service quality.

6. Voids

- The Void Standard Policy is currently under review. The Council recognises that tenants' needs vary depending on individual circumstances.
- In response to a tenant's question, Maggie explained the voids process: when a property is vacated, a pre-inspection is carried out and a full report with photos is produced. This forms the basis for contractor instructions. After works are completed, a post-inspection with photos is undertaken.
- A new tenant reported several issues left unresolved in her property, particularly in the loft. Maggie agreed to investigate.
- Maggie also noted plans to change the culture around re-charges, as many properties are left with significant damage or large amounts of personal belongings, which are costly to remove.

7. Decent Homes Programmes

- Stock condition surveys are underway to ensure compliance with the Decent Homes Standard, which requires social housing to be safe, warm, and in a reasonable state of repair.
- In 2025, 1,038 upgrades were completed, including kitchen and bathroom programmes, which are now nearing completion, along with the boiler replacement programme.
- For 2026, 1,838 upgrades are planned, including window and door replacements and roofing works.
- A tenant raised concerns about a water tank at Darley Dene. Maggie will investigate and follow up.

8. Customer Services Module

- A major IT upgrade to the Customer Relationship Management system has been completed. This will help ensure that tenant information is accurate and up to date, enabling better understanding of tenants' needs.
- Customer Services staff now follow a script when speaking with tenants to ensure information is captured consistently.
- Tenants will be encouraged to use digital services for quicker and more transparent communication. The "One Account" system is being developed to allow tenants to manage their tenancy, report repairs, and view planned maintenance for their property. The aim is to support tenants in sustaining their tenancies.

9. *Garfield Estate parking:*

- Maggie provided an update on work to address parking issues at the Garfield Estate. An interactive map is being prepared to support resident consultation. Residents will be able to comment, propose ideas, and provide feedback on the Council's proposals. The consultation is expected to open on 22 January. The Council's proposals will be open for comment for three weeks, while the wider consultation for residents' ideas will remain open until 10 March.

III. Consultation on the revised Repairs Policy

Angela Horsey outlined the proposed revisions to the Repairs Policy including changes required under Awaab's Law and updated practice regarding fencing. Andrea will circulate the revised policy, and members will provide feedback.

IV. Any Other Business

Members raised issues requiring follow up.

Actions agreed:

Out-of-order lifts:

What measures does the Council take to ensure residents' safety and to maintain mobility for disabled residents when lifts are out of service, particularly at Surrey Towers (ST) and in the IRL schemes?

MCP access:

Is the Council ensuring that MCP has access to the Surrey Towers penthouse for essential works?

Post inspection:

Lofts to be included in inspection reports, with photos required.

Water tank at Darley Dene:

A tenant raised concerns about a water tank at Darley Dene – to be followed up.

Repairs Policy:

The revised Repairs Policy to be circulated for feedback.

Surrey Towers repaint:

Is the planned repainting of Surrey Towers, following the lift replacements (with the colour to be chosen by residents), still scheduled?

• Dangerous foxes:

What action can the Council take regarding dangerous foxes around Grove Road in Chertsey? – this question was referred to the next Neighbourhood and Communities Group meeting.

Next meeting

The next meeting is on 16 March 2026 at 10.30 am for 11.00 am.