

Appendix 3: Barham Park Tenant Feedback (Stage 1 Pre-Consultation)

Overall Assessment of feedback:

Tenants consistently describe Barham Park Estate as a high-value community asset that is well-used, socially impactful, and strongly aligned with the Trust's charitable objectives. However, there is widespread concern about the deteriorating condition of buildings, slow or reactive maintenance, energy inefficiency, and unclear management arrangements. While most tenants state their buildings are *mostly* fit for purpose, this is often caveated by reliance on tenants' own investment and goodwill.

Key Themes

1. Building Condition & Fabric

- **Consistent reports of deterioration** across multiple units, including:
 - Roof leaks, blocked gutters, damp, water ingress
 - Rotten or damaged external cladding and brickwork
 - Aging, single-glazed or poorly performing windows
 - Internal damage (bowed ceilings, flooring deterioration, peeling paint)
- Several tenants note that structural and external fabric issues have not been addressed proactively, leading to repeat problems and internal damage.

Implication:

There is a clear need for a planned, estate-wide fabric and condition survey, rather than piecemeal repairs.

2. Maintenance & Repairs

- Maintenance is widely described as reactive, slow, and lacking urgency.
- Tenants report:
 - Chasing repairs repeatedly
 - Contractors arriving without understanding multi-tenant layouts
 - Repairs promised but not completed
- In several cases, tenants have undertaken or funded works themselves (e.g. boilers, radiators, refurbishments) due to delays.

Implication:

Current arrangements are perceived as inefficient and reputationally damaging, increasing risk to assets and tenant relationships.

3. Energy Efficiency & Sustainability

- Energy inefficiency is a universal concern, with repeated references to:
 - Single-glazed or outdated windows
 - Poor insulation
 - Inefficient heating systems
- Tenants note long-standing promises (e.g. centralised heating, window replacement) that have not materialised.

Implication:

There is strong tenant support for capital investment in energy efficiency, aligned with sustainability objectives and long-term cost reduction.

4. Accessibility, Safety & Compliance

- Requests include:
 - Improved disability access (ramps, door hardware, grab rails)
 - Safer entrances and exits for elderly users
 - Improved lighting, particularly in winter
 - Security concerns (break-ins, vulnerable studios, roof access by children)
- Several user groups serve older people, disabled users, and vulnerable communities, increasing the importance of compliance.

Implication:

Accessibility and safety upgrades are not optional enhancements but core service requirements.

5. Space Constraints & Functionality

- Specific operational constraints raised:
 - Lack of secure storage (e.g. Unit 1 request for loft storage with plans already drawn)
 - Some units unsuitable due to proximity to bins or security risks
- Despite constraints, occupancy remains high, reflecting demand and community reliance.

6. Management & Governance

- Feedback highlights confusion over roles and responsibilities, including:
 - Who manages the estate
 - Who instructs contractors
 - Who holds responsibility for compliance (fire alarms, gas, electrics)
- Some tenants feel site management presence is minimal, with loss of continuity and local knowledge.
- One tenant explicitly calls for greater tenant and local representation at Trustee level.

Implication:

There is a need for clearer governance, communication, and a visible management structure to support estate operations.

7. Strategic Uncertainty

- At least one tenant raised concerns about long-term plans for disposal, demolition, or redevelopment post-2031, asking:
 - What happens to existing tenants?
 - Whether alternative or replacement accommodation will be provided?

Implication:

Early clarity on long-term estate strategy is essential to manage risk, expectations, and tenant confidence.

Conclusions

- Barham Park Estate delivers exceptional community value, supporting arts, culture, older people, faith groups, veterans, and minority communities.
- The estate is operationally resilient only because tenants are compensating for asset shortcomings.
- Without intervention, risks include:
 - Accelerating asset degradation
 - Rising reactive maintenance costs
 - Health & safety and compliance exposure
 - Erosion of trust with long-standing tenants

Next Steps

1. Commission an estate-wide condition, energy, and compliance survey – underway.
2. Develop a prioritised capital works programme (fabric, windows, roofs, energy) – completed and Phase 1 works completed in line with budget availability. Officers will consider replacing the remaining deteriorating windows, subject to budget availability and Trust Committee approval.
3. Review and clarify maintenance and contractor management arrangements.
4. Address accessibility and safety as priority works, not discretionary items.
5. Communicate long-term estate intentions transparently to tenants in Phase 2 consultation regarding the 2031 vision.