

Council Report

Improving Places Select Commission Meeting- 5th April

Title

Rotherham Tenant Involvement Strategy Progress Update Report

Is this a Key Decision and has it been included on the Forward Plan?

No.

Director Approving Submission of the Report

Anne Marie Lubanski, Strategic Director Adult Care and Housing

Report author(s):

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Ward(s) Affected

All

Executive Summary

We are now confirmed as a Tpas (Tenant Engagement Experts) accredited landlord for Resident Involvement Excellence from 2016 for a period of three-years. Therefore it was a perfect opportunity to revise and update the council's Tenant Involvement Strategy in partnership with Rother Fed (Rotherham Federation of Communities).

The revised and updated Tenant Involvement Strategy was consulted with and approved by the Housing Involvement Panel in February 2017.

We will continue to monitor and evaluate the impact of the strategy through the following ways:

- The Tenant Involvement Service Improvement Plan of activities included in this Strategy will be reviewed frequently with our tenants
- Monitor our progress against the recommendations which came out of the Tpas accreditation to achieve maximum improvement over the next three years
- Monitor our progress against the Tpas Community Engagement Standards
- Continued monitoring of the number of tenants involved in different ways to ensure they are representative of our customer base
- Monitoring and evaluating customer satisfaction through our annual satisfaction survey (STAR), we will use 2 questions in the STAR survey to performance manage against Tenant Involvement:
 - % Satisfaction that we listen to and act on views

- % Satisfaction with the opportunity to make their views known
- Using more 'We asked, You Said, We Did' case studies that have happened because of tenant involvement so we have positive stories to feedback to tenants.

Recommendations

That the Improving Places Select Commission:

- Note the positive progress made to date.
- A further progress report to be brought back in 12 months.

List of Appendices Included

Appendix 1 – Rotherham Tenant Involvement Strategy

Background Papers

Rotherham Tenant Involvement Strategy

Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel

Housing Involvement Panel Meeting, 10th February 2017

Council Approval Required

No

Exempt from the Press and Public

No

Title (Main report)

Rotherham Tenant Involvement Strategy Progress Update Report

1. Recommendations

That the Improving Places Select Commission:

- Note the positive progress made to date.
- A further progress report to be brought back in 12 months.

2. Background

In 2015, a review of Tenant Involvement in the Council was undertaken by speaking to tenants, different officers and Rother Fed representatives. As part of the review, it was identified that we needed to develop a Tenant Involvement Strategy. The Council's Tenant Involvement Strategy had been in place since October 2015 and was launched at Rother Fed's Delegates meeting.

Rotherham Council Housing & Neighbourhood Services have recently earned 'accredited landlord' status for the council from Tpas (tenant engagement experts) in September 2016– in recognition of the commitment to involving council tenants in decisions that affect them. The rigorous process involved a full assessment of the council's approach to tenant engagement and included interviews with tenants and staff. We are now confirmed as a Tpas accredited landlord for Resident Involvement Excellence from 2016 for a period of three-years. Therefore it was a perfect opportunity to revise and update the council's Tenant Involvement Strategy in partnership with Rother Fed.

This is great news, and shows how committed we are to making sure tenants' views and input is at the heart of our housing and neighbourhood services. It reflects the strategic improvements we have made recently with regards to Tenant Involvement working alongside Rother Fed, tenants and staff. The Council will use this award to continue to raise our standards of our services working with tenants and leaseholders.

This was also a great chance to incorporate the new Tpas Community Engagement Standards. The overall aim of our Tenant Involvement Strategy is to understand the needs, expectations, aspirations, achievements and experiences of Council tenants and to improve services as a result of this. One of the recommendations from our Tpas accreditations was that we needed to improve on capturing and evaluating the impact of our tenant involvement activities. We aim to achieve this by following the new Tpas community engagement standards where we have already started to achieve standards 1-5. We know we need to deliver against on standard 6 'Valuing Engagement' ensuring the outcomes are benefitting our tenants and leaseholders. Following the Tpas Community Engagement Standards will enable us to consistently follow and embed good practice when we engage with our tenants.

The revised and updated Tenant Involvement Strategy was consulted with and approved by the Housing Involvement Panel in February 2017.

We will continue to monitor and evaluate the impact of the strategy through the following ways:

- The Tenant Involvement Service Improvement Plan of activities included in this Strategy will be reviewed frequently with our tenants
- Monitor our progress against the recommendations which came out of the Tpas accreditation to achieve maximum improvement over the next three years
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- Continued monitoring of the number of tenants involved in different ways to ensure they are representative of our customer base
- Monitoring and evaluating customer satisfaction through our annual satisfaction survey (STAR), we will use 2 questions in the STAR survey to performance manage against Tenant Involvement:
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Key Achievements as a result of the priorities from the Strategy

- Rotherham Council Housing & Neighbourhood Services are now confirmed as a Tpas accredited Landlord for Resident Involvement Excellence from 2016 for a period of three-years.
- Our first STAR (Tenants Satisfaction) Survey since 2008 went out last year which received a 29% response rate which was very positive. BMG Research Company carried this out on our behalf which goes out to a random sample of 4500 tenants.
 - 83% were satisfied with the overall housing service provided by the Council.
 - High levels of satisfaction for quality of home (83%), value for money (76%), repairs and maintenance (78%) and neighbourhood as a place to live (83%).
- Our second STAR (Tenants Satisfaction) Survey has commenced in March 2017
- The Housing Involvement Panel has been meeting bimonthly since May 2016 and has been making good progress with Area Housing Panel Chairs, Rother Fed and tenants including young tenants getting involved in discussions and consultations with regards to the Housing Strategy, HRA Business Plan, Shared Accommodation, Universal credit etc.
- The Quality Standards Challenge Group is meeting quarterly focussing on the monitoring the Local Offer and scrutinising/challenging our Housing Performance through mystery shopping and testing of our services.
- Rother Fed is carrying out scrutiny reviews on our behalf and the first one is the 'Young Tenants and Engagement' report which has now been published.
- Held a successful Tenants Conference in Summer 2016 with over 150 in attendance this included 'Getting Involved' and 'Digital Inclusion' Workshops. The next Tenants Conference is taking place in July 2017.
- The Rotherham Borough Council Garden Competition 2016 presentation ceremony took place in the Town Hall where prizes were awarded by the Cabinet Member for Housing and the Mayor of Rotherham. A record 63 entries were received, with the standard of the gardens being better than ever.

- Continue working with Communications & Marketing Team to improve communications and feeding back to tenants through Home Matters and website etc.
- We have been recently shortlisted for 'Excellence in Tenant Engagement' at the Northern region TPAS awards, which recognise housing organisations that are making a real difference to lives and communities.

2.1 This Strategy is contributing towards the following Corporate Priorities, Safer Rotherham Partnership and Housing Strategy Priorities:

The Corporate Plan priorities such as:

- A strong community in a clean, safe environment
- Extending opportunity, prosperity and planning for the future

And the Safer Rotherham Partnership priorities such as:

- Building Confident and Cohesive Communities
- Reducing and Managing Anti-social Behaviour (ASB) and Criminal Damage

The Housing Strategy priority:

- Delivering high quality services and support, and peaceful and well managed neighbourhoods

3. Key Issues

We have reviewed the Tenant Involvement menu of options and introduced a new Housing Involvement Panel which has replaced the Area Housing Chairs and gives the tenants an opportunity to strategically influence our housing policies and services. We are working hard to widen and improve the ways tenants can talk to us e.g. digital inclusion, so under-represented groups can help to make a positive difference to the services they use. An example of this is that Rother Fed has undertaken a scrutiny review on our behalf of Young tenants and engagement.

Our approach towards developing and updating this Strategy has been recognised as good practice through a blog which has been published on the Tpas website which can be accessed via the link below:

www.tpas.org.uk/members-news/our-tenant-involvement-strategy-at-rotherham

4. Options considered and recommended proposal

None arising from this progress report.

5. Consultation

The revised and updated Tenant Involvement Strategy was consulted with and approved by the Housing Involvement Panel in February 2017.

6. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision

None arising from this progress report.

7. Financial and Procurement Implications

None arising from this progress report.

8. Legal Implications

None arising from this progress report.

9. Human Resources Implications

Continue to deliver Strategy with existing resources.

10. Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults

This will complement the delivery of the Housing Strategy that will contribute to the Corporate Plan priority of 'Every child making the best start in life. Children require safe, warm homes to grow up in if they are to learn and fulfil their potential'. Housing cuts across each of the themes identified to ensure Rotherham is a child-centred borough.

The Strategy also significantly contributes to the Corporate Plan priority 'Every adult secure, responsible and empowered. Decent housing underpins positive physical and mental health and can help older people to remain in their own homes for longer, potentially reducing costs in health and social care services'.

11. Equalities and Human Rights Implications

An Equality Analysis has been carried out on the Strategy with Rother Fed. One of the key priorities in the Strategy is to 'Listen to more 'disadvantaged' and 'underrepresented' individuals and groups, and act upon their advice/ opinions/views'.

Tenants being involved will complement the Housing Strategy which will have a positive impact on addressing homelessness, affordable housing targets, economic regeneration, positive landscape and environmental improvements in some of our most deprived neighbourhoods around the town centre, and support young people and older people to live independently and with a choice over their housing options.

12. Implications for Partners and Other Directorates

The Tenant Involvement Strategy has been developed in partnership with Rother Fed who will continue to work with us on delivering some of the tenant involvement activity as part of our contract with them.

We work closely with communications and marketing team to ensure we communicate and feed back to tenants through various channels. We are working closely with Performance and Quality Team to consistently capture outcomes and impact from our tenant involvement activities.

13. Risks and Mitigation

The key risk is failure to deliver against the priorities in the Tenant Involvement Strategy. This is mitigated by ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the strategy by the Housing Involvement Panel.

14. Accountable Officer(s)

Tom Bell, Assistant Director Housing and Neighbourhoods