

Council Report

Improving Places Select Commission Meeting - 7th June 2018

Title

Young Tenants Housing Scrutiny Review Action Plan Progress Update

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

No

Director Approving Submission of the Report

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Report author(s)

Asim Munir (Tenant Involvement Coordinator)

Ward(s) Affected

All

Executive Summary

The RotherFed Tenant Scrutiny Working Group first review was to consider the engagement of young tenants in Council housing. This topic was selected as it had been established that younger tenants, aged between 16 and 34, were on the whole more dissatisfied with housing services.

This scrutiny review and the Council action plan were agreed by Improving Places Select Commission (IPSC) on 5th April 2017 and it was agreed that the action would plan be brought back every six months detailing progress against the recommendations. The latest progress update against the recommendations is outlined in the Action Plan (please see Appendix 1).

All of the recommendations are on track with some key achievements such as the:

- development of the Younger Tenants Forum,
- young tenants having input into key policies such as the Housing Strategy, HRA Business Plan and
- areas of work such as the pre tenancy workshops and customer care training.

Recommendations:

- 1.1 Note the progress made to date against the Action Plan.
- 1.2 Agree to receive a further report in November 2018.

Background Papers

Appendix 1 – The Council’s Engagement with Rother Fed’s Young Tenants Scrutiny Review Action Plan

Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel

None

Council Approval Required

No

Exempt from the Press and Public

No

Young Tenants Housing Scrutiny Review Action Plan Progress Update

1. Recommendations

- 1.1 Note the progress made to date against the Action Plan.
- 1.2 Agree to receive a further report in November 2018.

2. Background

2.1 The Council awarded the Tenant Federation Contract to Rother Fed in 2016 following a tendering process. As part of the contract, Rother Fed undertakes scrutiny reviews on behalf of the Council to inform service improvement across Housing and Neighbourhood Services.

2.2 The first review undertaken by the RotherFed Tenant Scrutiny working group focussed on the engagement of younger tenants. This topic was selected as it had been established that younger tenants, aged between 16 and 34, were on the whole more dissatisfied with their landlord's services. The 2016 STAR (Survey of Tenants and Residents) survey of tenants and residents found that 28% of tenants under 35 were dissatisfied with their landlord listening to their views and acting upon them. This compared to only 18% dissatisfied across other age groups.

2.3 The Objectives of the scrutiny review:

To find out:

- Why younger tenants are not engaging with their landlord.
- How younger tenants would like to be engaged with housing services, if at all.
- Why some younger tenants are dissatisfied with housing services.

To suggest how to:

- Improve the engagement of younger tenants and their satisfaction with housing services.
- Shape the future tenant involvement offer for younger tenants.
- Potentially improve the STAR survey results for satisfaction of young tenants that their landlord are listening to their views and acting upon them.

2.4 The report summarised the findings of the investigation including the evidence leading to recommendations being developed to improve how we engage and work with younger tenants.

2.5 The Council developed an Action Plan to respond to the recommendations from the scrutiny review which was previously agreed by the Improving Places Select Commission in April 2017.

3. Key Issues

3.1 The Action Plan (appendix 1) shows that all the recommendations are in progress with some of them already being achieved. These include the development of the Young Tenants Forum which is meeting on a regular basis

now. They are also attending the Housing Involvement Panel and have already had positive input into our policies and services e.g. Housing Strategy, HRA Business Plan, Housing Growth, Grange Road remodelled flats etc.

- 3.2 The progress against the actions demonstrate that the council are getting some of the young tenants more involved in key areas of work such as informing the customer care training with staff, pre tenancy workshops and welfare reform. The Council are working with the young tenants to inform our menu of options of tenant involvement and the digital inclusion agenda.
- 3.3 This scrutiny review is contributing towards the following Corporate Priorities, Safer Rotherham Partnership and Housing Strategy Priorities:
The Council Plan priorities such as:
 - A strong community in a clean, safe environment
 - Extending opportunity, prosperity and planning for the future
- 3.4 And the Safer Rotherham Partnership priorities such as:
 - Building Confident and Cohesive Communities
 - Reducing and Managing Anti-social Behaviour (ASB) and Criminal Damage
- 3.5 The Housing Strategy priority:
 - Delivering high quality services and support, and peaceful and well managed neighbourhoods

4. Options considered and recommended proposal

- 4.1 Fuller details of progress against the Action Plan are set out in Appendix 1.

5. Consultation

- 5.1 The Action Plan has been previously agreed by the Housing Involvement Panel and the Housing and Neighbourhood Senior Management Team in August 2017.

6. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision

- 6.1 Delivery against the recommendations in the action plan is being monitored by the Housing Involvement Panel every 6 months.
- 6.2 The overall accountable officer is Tom Bell, Assistant Director for Housing and Neighbourhoods.

7. Financial and Procurement Implications

- 7.1 None arising from this progress report.

8. Legal Implications

- 8.1 None arising from this progress report.

9. Human Resources Implications

9.1 None arising from this progress report.

10. Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults

10.1 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 friendly borough.

10.2 This scrutiny review also significantly contributes to the Corporate Plan priority 'Every adult secure, responsible and empowered'.

11. Equalities and Human Rights Implications

11.1 This scrutiny review comes under one of the key priorities in the Tenant Involvement Strategy, which is to 'Listen to more disadvantaged' and 'underrepresented' individuals and groups, and act upon their advice/opinions/views'. An Equality Analysis has been carried out on the Tenant Involvement Strategy with Rother Fed.

11.2 Tenants being involved will help shape 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

12.1 The Housing and Neighbourhoods Senior Management Team will continue to work with Rother Fed towards delivering the recommendations in the action plan. Some of these recommendations will involve cross collaboration across the relevant council services and partners.

13. Risks and Mitigation

13.1 The key risk is the failure to engage young tenants and inability to deliver against the recommendations in the action plan. This will be mitigated by ongoing monitoring, scrutiny and evaluation of the recommendations by the Improving Places Select Commission, Housing Involvement Panel and the Housing and Neighbourhoods Senior Management team.

14. Accountable Officer(s)

14.1 Tom Bell (Assistant Director Housing and Neighbourhood Services), Adult Care, Housing and Public Health.