

Committee Name and Date of Committee Meeting

Improving Places Select Commission – 19 March 2024

Report Title

Update: Tenants Scrutiny Panel Review - Improving Communication with Tenants

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

No

Strategic Director Approving Submission of the Report

Ian Spicer, Strategic Director of Adult Care, Housing and Public Health

Report Author(s)

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Ward(s) Affected

Borough-Wide

Report Summary

A report detailing the Tenant Scrutiny Panel review of how the Council communicates with tenants, together with a number of recommendations, was presented to Improving Places Select Commission on 21st March 2023.

IPSC requested that an update be provided in 12 months' time.

This report and the accompanying presentation to be delivered at the meeting, provides an overall summary of progress made in response to the recommendations and the associated action plan.

Recommendations

1. That the Improving Places Select Commission note the progress made in delivering the scrutiny review action plan.

List of Appendices Included

Appendix 1: IPSC Report Tenant Scrutiny Review of Communications

Appendix 2: Tenants Scrutiny Panel Review Action Plan.

Appendix 3: Presentation detailing progress to date.

Background Papers

Meeting Minutes, Improving Places Select Commission, 21st March 2023.

Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel

None.

Council Approval Required

No

Exempt from the Press and Public

No

Update: Tenants Scrutiny Panel Review - Improving Communication with Tenants

1. Background

- 1.1 Since its inception in 2016, the Tenant Scrutiny Panel has undertaken several tenant scrutiny reviews of various aspects of the Council's Housing Services. The reviews have subsequently been reported to the Improving Places Select Commission.
- 1.2 Tenant Scrutiny Panel reviews have provided an ongoing opportunity for customers to work collaboratively with the Council, to look at various aspects of landlord service delivery, from a customer perspective, and to develop recommendations and actions for service improvement.
- 1.3 The Review set out nine recommendations and four further suggestions for service improvement which are detailed in Appendix 1 and Appendix 2.
- 1.4 The scrutiny review was undertaken in the context of the publication of the Social Housing White Paper but prior to the publication of the Regulator of Social Housing Consumer Standards. However, the recommendations and associated outcomes of the review directly contribute towards the Council delivering the outcomes and expectations of the new consumer standards. Specifically, the Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard, which requires that:
 - Registered Providers must ensure that communication with and information for tenants is clear, accessible, relevant, timely and appropriate to the diverse needs of tenants.
 - Registered Providers must ensure that landlord services are accessible, and that the accessibility is publicised to tenants. This includes supporting tenants and prospective tenants to use online landlord services if required.
 - Registered providers must communicate with tenants and provide information so tenants can use landlord services, understand what to expect from their landlord, and hold their landlord to account.
 - Registered providers must provide tenants with information about the available landlord services, how to access those services, and the standards of service tenants can expect.
- 1.5 The scrutiny review has contributed to the wider work being undertaken to ensure that the Council provides information about its housing services, which is fully accessible to tenants and that information and communication is publicised in a clear, relevant, and timely way that is appropriate to the diverse needs of Council tenants.

2. Key Issues

- 2.1 The Tenant Scrutiny Panel developed nine recommendations and four further suggestions to improve communications with tenants.

2.2 The recommendations and associated actions have required the involvement of other services within the Council, in terms of scoping of actions and delivery.

3. Options considered and recommended proposal

3.1 The Tenant Scrutiny Panel developed nine recommendations and four further suggestions which have been responded to through the delivery of the associated action plan.

3.2 Appendix 2 details the actions agreed, and progress made is detailed in Appendix 3, the presentation which will be delivered to the IPSC meeting.

4. Consultation on proposal

4.1 Consultation on the proposal is documented within Appendix 1, which is the original IPSC report presented on 21st March 2023.

5. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision

5.1 The original timetable of activity, detailed in Appendix 1, has been met.

6. Financial and Procurement Advice and Implications

6.1 There are no direct financial implications. Any costs because of this activity are already included in the base budget.

7. Legal Advice and Implications

7.1 There are no substantive legal issues arising from the content of this report.

7.2 The recommendations and findings within assist the Council with its preparation for the introduction of the Consumer Standards by the Regulator for Social Housing.

8. Human Resources Advice and Implications

8.1 There are no HR implications arising from this report.

9. Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults

9.1 Improved accessibility to landlord services and improved communication opportunities positively benefit children, young people and vulnerable adults.

10. Equalities and Human Rights Advice and Implications

10.1 Details of the assessment outlining equalities and human rights implications can be found in Appendix 1.

11. Implications for CO₂ Emissions and Climate Change

11.1 Details of the assessment outlining CO₂ emissions and climate change can be found in Appendix 1

12. Implications for Partners

12.1 Details of the assessment outlining Implications for partners can be found in Appendix 1.

13. Risks and Mitigation

13.1 The key risk identified within the report at Appendix 1 was successfully addressed through the development, monitoring and delivery of the review action plan.

Accountable Officer(s)

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