

**Committee Name and Date of Committee Meeting**

Improving Places Select Commission – 8<sup>th</sup> July 2025

**Report Title**

Tenant Scrutiny Panel Review – Tenancy Health Check Visits

**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)**

Paul Walsh, Head of Service, Housing & Estates

[Paul.Walsh@rotheham.gov.uk](mailto:Paul.Walsh@rotheham.gov.uk)

**Ward(s) Affected.**

Borough-Wide

**Report Summary**

The Tenant Scrutiny Panel completed a review of the Tenancy Health Check (THC) process, looking at the scope and purpose of the visits, how they are arranged and undertaken, whilst, identifying recommendations for service improvement.

This report presents a summary of the findings, alongside recommendations to enhance the quality and consistency of delivery, transparency of purpose, and overall impact of the Tenancy Health Check visits.

**Recommendations**

That Improving Places Select Commission:

1. Note the outcome of the Tenant Scrutiny Review, the actions proposed to deal with each recommendation and progress to date.
2. That a further report detailing progress is presented to Improving Places Select Commission in 12 months' time.

## **List of Appendices Included**

- **Appendix 1** Tenants Scrutiny Review Action Plan.
- **Appendix 2** Initial Equalities Screening Assessment
- **Appendix 3** Climate Impact assessment

## **Background Papers**

- Tenancy Scrutiny Review THC Report

## **Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel**

No

## **Council Approval Required**

No

## **Exempt from the Press and Public**

No

## 1. Background

- 1.1 Tenant Scrutiny Panel reviews provide an ongoing opportunity for tenants to work pro-actively with the Council, to look at various aspects of landlord service delivery, from a customer perspective and develop recommendations and actions for service improvement
- 1.2 In April 2024, The Tenancy Health Check (THC) process was selected by the Tenant Scrutiny Panel for review.
- 1.3 The Tenants Scrutiny Panel identified areas where improvements could be made following discussions with officers and tenants. The review looked at several stages of the THC process and how visits are conducted. This included:
- The clarity of communication regarding the purpose of the visits.
  - The effectiveness of visits in identifying and addressing tenant support needs.
  - The frequency and overall purpose of visits.
  - Reviewing questions and lines of enquiry asked in THC form.
- 1.4 The review methodology included tenant surveys, benchmarking against other housing providers, officer interviews, and case studies.
- 1.5 The Panel examined how effectively the visits identify safeguarding concerns and ensure property conditions are maintained. The review included:
- The extent to which Tenancy Health Checks support early identification of safeguarding concerns.
  - The impact of visits in improving tenant engagement and supporting referrals.
  - The consistency of visit procedures across different housing officers and locality teams.
  - The level of tenant awareness regarding the purpose and benefits of the visits.
- 1.6 Key findings from benchmarking highlighted the importance of standardised procedures, proactive communication, and a tenant-centred approach to these visits.

## 2. Key Issues

- 2.1 The review identified the following areas requiring improvement:
- **Visit Purpose & Name:** The term "Tenancy Health Check" was found to be misrepresentative, and a new name recommended.
  - **Communication:** Improving communication, including text/email reminders, is recommended.
  - **Officer Consistency:** Discrepancies in how visits were conducted were noted, suggesting a need for standardised training and oversight.

- **Support & Advocacy:** Some tenants, particularly those with additional needs, would benefit from a clearer mechanism to request supported visits.
- **Visit Frequency & Performance Monitoring:** The current four-year cycle requires flexibility for some tenants; a risk-based approach is recommended.
- **Data Handling & IT Systems:** Issues were noted in how tenants' personal data was recorded, including terminology that could be considered insensitive.

2.2 Good progress has already been made against the recommendations, which demonstrates the value the Council places upon the Tenant Scrutiny Review framework, ensuring tenant voices are clearly heard in how we shape, deliver and continually improve services.

### **3. Options considered and recommended proposal**

3.1 Progress in delivering the actions from the Tenant Scrutiny Review are detailed within the action plan in Appendix 1.

### **4. Consultation on proposal**

4.1 The action plan, associated with this report (Appendix 1) will be monitored at Tenant Scrutiny Panel meetings, which are attended by Council officers, Rotherfed and tenant representatives.

### **5. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision**

5.1 The Council's Housing Service along with the nominated lead officers in the action plan have responsibility for implementing the findings of the review and delivering the associated action plan within the designated timescales.

5.2 The Tenant Scrutiny Panel will receive regular updates on progress against the recommendations and actions.

5.3 A further report will be presented to the Improving Places Select Commission in 12 months' time, detailing progress on delivering the action plan.

### **6. Financial and Procurement Advice and Implications**

6.1 There are procurement implications arising from the recommendations detailed in the action plan.

6.2 There are no significant financial implications arising from the recommendations within this report. All proposed activity will be funded from within existing resources.

## **7. Legal Advice and Implications**

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

7.2 Implementation of the recommendations will support the Council's commitment to meeting statutory and regulatory requirements arising from the Social Housing Regulator customer standards. Particularly the Safety and Quality Standard that requires registered providers to have 'an accurate record at an individual property level of the condition of their homes, based on a physical assessment of all homes...' and the Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard.

## **8. Human Resources Advice and Implications**

8.1 Officer training recommendations will be delivered within existing workforce development programmes.

## **9. Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults**

9.1 Improving how we support all tenants will positively benefit engagement with children, young people, and vulnerable adults.

## **10. Equalities and Human Rights Advice and Implications**

10.1 We will actively engage under-represented groups and use our customer data to ensure services and communications are accessible and meet the diverse needs of our tenants and neighbourhoods by contributing to the Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategy 2022-25 through the following

- Understanding, listening, and engaging across all communities.
- Delivering fair, inclusive, and accessible services.
- Empowering people to engage and challenge discrimination and to promote good community relations.

## **11. Implications for CO2 Emissions and Climate Change**

11.1 Climate change poses a significant threat to environments, individuals, communities, and economies on local, national, and international scales. In recognition of this the Council has aimed to be net carbon neutral as an organisation by 2030, and for Rotherham to achieve the same position by 2040.

## **12. Implications for Partners**

12.1 The Council has a contract in place with Rother Fed (local Tenant Federation provider) to support the delivery of the work undertaken by the Tenant Scrutiny Panel, as part of the Council's Tenant Engagement

12.2 Framework.

The Council will continue to seek out best practice and consider how to continually improve scrutiny and engagement with tenants through its Exemplar Accreditation and membership of national tenant participation advisory service, TPAS.

### **13. Risks and Mitigation**

- 13.1 The key risk is the failure to engage with the Tenant Scrutiny Panel in Rotherfed 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 and the Housing Options Management Team

### **14. Accountable Officers**

John Holman, Interim Assistant Director of Housing

*Report Author:* Paul Walsh, Head of Service, Housing & Estates  
Paul.Walsh@rotherham.gov.uk

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