

Tenant Scrutiny Meeting

Monday 11th March 2024, 10:30am at Springwell Gardens Community Centre

Attendees

David Ramsden, Ann Hitchens, Winnie Billups, Keith Stringer, Barry Dealey, Phil Hayes, Rebecca Morrison, Callie Lamb, Daisy Wardle, Laura Swift

1	Welcome, introductions and apologies David welcomed everyone to the meeting, introductions were made. There were no declarations of interest. Apologies have been received from Julie Sharp, Sam Sharp, Mary Jacques and Wendy Birch. Panel members should complete a declaration of interest form for this investigation.	
2	Minutes and actions from last meeting The minutes were read through. Rebecca has spoken to Andy Lumb who is looking at Dean Burrell attending the panel in April and Wendy Foster in June.	
3	Aids and Adaptations The policy was approved by cabinet in December. There has been a 3-month implementation plan, and the policy is effective on 1 st April 2024. Daisy is looking to develop a document which will be a summary of the 50-page policy (e.g. 10-12 pages) the panel suggested highlighting in the summary document where council tenants have had a say and what the council has implemented as a result of tenant involvement. Daisy will come back in May to share the document with the panel, it will not be designed at this point. Laura will send Daisy the 'we said, the Council did' document. Daisy queried whether the panel felt the document would benefit from a frequently asked questions section, the panel agreed that it would be useful to include. Rebecca suggested including contact information for relevant services/departments.	LS

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New tenants support

We haven't received any information for the investigation on sustainability. Performance officers were not interviewed. The panel also haven't looked at support for new tenant communications.

The panel went through the suggested recommendations, made changes and put them in order of priority.

Recommendation A – affordability meeting

Provide a document after the affordability meeting with finance colleagues with all the calculations and key information, including how people make arrangements to pay their rent.

Recommendation B – Key Choices description

Manage new tenant expectations by providing additional information on the key choices website, including:

- That the property is unfurnished and is likely to need decoration
- A plan of the layout and room sizes (rather than a list of dimensions)

Recommendation C – virtual viewings re-evaluation

Following expiry of the current contract, plan to re-evaluate the policy of minimising in-person viewings and potentially offering them to ALL new tenants by:

- Carrying out a wider survey of tenants to ask if they would prefer virtual or in-person viewings.
- Costing out if virtual viewings make substantial savings when considering the cost of the video contract.

Recommendation D – viewing for vulnerable new tenants

Improve the application form to provide more support to vulnerable new tenants by including questions such as:

- Whether the applicant needs to request an in-person viewing due to physical and /or mental health needs.
- If the prospective new tenant needs their support worker to view the property with them

Allow more than 48 hours' notice for the viewing if needed to ensure that a support worker is available to attend.

Recommendation E – welcome pack

Make improvements to the current welcome pack for new tenants to hand out at sign up, including information such as neighbourhood / community activities, how to report a repair, damp and mould advice, and specific house details such as how to work the boiler, location of stop tap, and bin collection days.

Recommendation F – welcome visit feedback

Make sure that feedback from the welcome visits on what could have been better for the tenant is collated and shared with voids team on a regular basis.

Recommendation G – clarity around the furniture scheme

Provide more clarity around the scheme by addition of up-to date information in the leaflets and on the website, including:

- The current prices
- Confirmation that the furniture package isn't a life-time commitment (participants can switch/ hand back at any time)
- How the furniture package can be paid for from housing benefit.

Work with learning disability organisations to let them know about the furniture scheme and the benefits.

Recommendation H – furniture scheme extension

Proactively extend and publicise the furniture scheme to other tenants (not just new tenants) including people who are struggling to buy new furniture and those who would like to move in first before deciding what they need/ can afford.

Recommendation I – measuring sustainability

Ensure that the length and sustainability of tenancies is monitored and reported such as measuring how many tenants remain in their new homes for 12 months and beyond, this should include reasons for termination.

Suggestions agreed by the panel are:

The panel feels that wherever possible, tenants should have the same support worker throughout the process.

A place of your own training - Consider whether further information should be added to the APOYO modules such as Fire Safety, preventing damp and mould, and 'getting involved'

Furniture scheme - Consider extending the scheme to include vacuum cleaners, irons and ironing boards.

Is there a link between whether an in-person viewing or virtual viewing took place and how long they stay in their new home.

Rebecca has started drafting the report which will be ready for the next meeting.

<p>5</p>	<p>Future plans for tenant scrutiny</p> <p>Phil spoke about the Council contract Rotherham Federation will be delivering. The contract includes 3 tenant scrutiny investigations per year. We will need to ensure we are sticking to the agenda and also involving different voices where possible going forward.</p> <p>We will be making the meetings more accessible digitally. We could also go out to different groups of people if necessary.</p>	
<p>6</p>	<p>Planning for the next meeting</p> <p>We could potentially look at downsizing as the next review. Callie will look at what complaints have been received to see what area of housing could potentially be future topics.</p>	
<p>7</p>	<p>Any other business</p> <p>None.</p>	
	<p>Next meeting date</p> <p>The next meeting will be on Monday 8th April 2024, 10.30am at Springwell Gardens Community Centre.</p>	