
Meeting: Social Care, Health and Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date: 7 April 2014

Subject: Tenant's Scrutiny Panel

Report of: Cllr Mrs Carole Hegley, Executive Member for Social Care Health and Housing

Summary: The report proposes the adoption of a Tenant's Scrutiny Panel investigation on improving the way Anti Social Behaviour is dealt with for the Council's Landlord Service as identified through their role in co regulation.

Advising Officer: Julie Ogley, Director of Social Care, Health and Housing

Contact Officer: Carol Rooker, Head of Housing Management

Public/Exempt: Public

Wards Affected: South of Central Bedfordshire

Function of: Council

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

Council Priorities:

1. As a landlord, the Council is responsible for providing good quality homes and services to the Council's tenants. Many of these tenants are vulnerable. Tenant scrutiny provides a means of ensuring that the Council has sound financial and service management and this will contribute to the Council providing value for money, and enabling the Council to successfully deliver its priorities.

Financial:

2. The costs involved in developing and supporting the Tenant's Scrutiny Panel can be covered within the existing Landlord Service Business Plan.

Legal:

3. The Council, as part of the new revised regulatory framework for social housing providers, is expected to give tenants a wide range of opportunities to influence, and be involved, in the following areas:
 - Formulating their landlord's housing related policies and priorities
 - Making decisions about how housing related services are delivered, including setting service standards
 - Scrutinising their landlord's performance and recommending how performance might be improved

The Tenant's Scrutiny Panel provides the formal scrutiny role for tenants, who will, if necessary, hold the Council to account for any concerns they have with the services that they receive.

Risk Management:

4. There is a reputational risk to the Council if there are inadequate arrangements in place to ensure that tenants are supported in being able to hold the Council as their landlord to account.

There is also a risk of intervention by the Homes and Communities Agency (Regulation Committee) if they consider that the Council is not complying with the regulatory arrangements, in terms of co-regulation.

There is a governance risk of the Panel failing to act in the best interests of the tenants and community. The above risks have been mitigated by the introduction of clear terms of reference and a robust Code of Conduct for the Tenants Scrutiny Panel and this mechanism for reporting the Panel's findings back to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Staffing (including Trades Unions):

5. Not Applicable.

Equalities/Human Rights:

6. The Council, as a public body, must act to eliminate unlawful discrimination, victimization and harassment against people on the grounds of race, religion or belief, age, sex, pregnancy and maternity, gender reassignment, sexual orientation and disability. Further, the duty requires the Council to advance equality of opportunity between different groups, and foster good relationships between different groups.

The National Standard for Housing Providers on Tenant Involvement and Empowerment – requires that the Council understands and responds to the diverse needs of tenants. The new Tenants Scrutiny Panel assists in progress on meeting this aim.

Public Health

7. Good quality housing and services have a positive impact on public health and well being.

Community Safety:

8. Not Applicable.

Sustainability:

9. Not Applicable.

Procurement:

10. Not applicable.

RECOMMENDATION(S):**The Committee is asked to:-**

1. **The Committee is asked consider the recommendations detailed in the report and where applicable to the Council, and recommend that they be implemented at the earliest opportunity and within the timescales outlined in the Tenant's Scrutiny Panel report on Anti Social Behaviour.**

- | |
|---|
| <p>2. That the Tenant’s Scrutiny Panel be invited to monitor the implementation of the recommendations and report to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in the future, on an exception basis, any recommendations not appropriately implemented within the timescales outlined in the report.</p> |
|---|

Background

1. Members will recall that as part of the Government’s revised regulatory framework for social housing, housing providers are expected to support tenants in enabling them to monitor and shape the housing services that are provided, and to hold their landlords to account.
2. As part of this requirement for co-regulation, the Council’s tenants, following consultation, agreed to set up a formal Tenants Scrutiny Panel, which was formed in 2013, and has now completed its first enquiry into the way that the Landlord Service deals and responds to complaints about anti social behaviour.
3. The initial report of the Tenant’s Scrutiny Panel was prepared by four members of the panel. See Appendix A – The Tenant’s Scrutiny Panel Report on Anti Social Behaviour, and please see Appendix B the Tenant’s Scrutiny Panel’s action plan.

Presentation

1. The Tenant’s Scrutiny Panel has prepared a presentation to showcase the report, its recommendations and the Action Plan which has been produced.

The second part of the presentation has been produced by the Landlord Service in response, to identify the actions it will take to implement the recommendations, and the learning from this first report.

Appendix C – The Tenants Scrutiny Panel Presentation on Anti Social Behaviour, and the Landlord Services response.

Appendices:

Appendix A – The Tenant’s Scrutiny Panel Report on Anti Social Behaviour
Appendix B – The Tenant’s Scrutiny Panel Action Plan on Anti Social Behaviour
Appendix C – The Tenants Scrutiny Panel Presentation on Anti Social Behaviour.

Background papers and their location: (open to public inspection)

Tenant’s Scrutiny Panel and Designated Persons and Tenant’s Complaints Panel from Social Care, Health and Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee 21 January 2013.