

Report to Safer and Active Communities Committee

24th November 2022

Subject:	Tenant & Leaseholder Scrutiny Group – Housing Hub Review
Director:	Director of Housing Director Gillian Douglas
Contact Officer:	Housing Services Manager, Nigel Collumbell Nigel_collumbell@sandwell.gov.uk

1 Recommendations

- 1.1 To receive and comment on the outcomes and recommendations following a review of the “Housing Hub Pilot” undertaken by the Tenant & Leaseholder Scrutiny Group




2 Background

- 2.1 The Tenant & Leaseholder Scrutiny Group was established in 2021 as part of the Tenant & Leaseholder Engagement Framework, which provides a variety of opportunities for customers to get involved in and to ensure our customers voice is heard and acted on when developing and delivering our housing services.
- 2.3 The Tenant & Leaseholder Scrutiny Group have developed their own work plan, identifying areas of service delivery that they wish to scrutinise. The first area of work selected for scrutiny was housing services pilot of a new approach to handling customer service requests received by telephone.

2.4



3 How does this deliver objectives of the Corporate Plan?

	Best start in life for children and young people
	People live well and age well
	Strong resilient communities Through strengthening tenant engagement and participation, it will enable: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Stronger relationships between the council and tenants ○ Enhanced information and communication ○ An opportunity for tenants to develop skills ○ Develop a greater sense of place within the community
	Quality homes in thriving neighbourhoods By involving tenants in housing services through a more coproduced approach will enable: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Improvement to services for tenants ○ Better value for money ○ Improved customer experience and satisfaction ○ Better customer loyalty
	A strong and inclusive economy
	A connected and accessible Sandwell

5 Housing Hub Review

5.1 The Tenant & Leaseholder Scrutiny Group determined the scope of their review, which included testing the customer experience of accessing housing services by telephone, checking the ease of navigation and whether tenants service requests were resolved in a timely, sensitive and professional manner.

5.2 The Tenant & Leaseholder Scrutiny Group deployed a number of methods with the support of council officers to complete their review.

This included conducting some mystery shopping, staff interviews and analysis of data and reports relating to the housing hub pilot.



5.3. The Tenant & Leaseholder Scrutiny Group report is attached at Appendix 1, which set out the groups key findings, conclusions and recommendations, along with details of the group's Mystery Shopper exercise and Staff Interviews. These documents were used to inform discussion with senior managers and are attached to demonstrate the level of tenants and leaseholder knowledge, research abilities, competency and time committed by the group in completing the work.

5.4 The findings of the Tenant & Leaseholder Scrutiny Group were discussed in detail with the relevant senior managers from Housing Services to reach a consensus on actions required to address areas of concern and opportunities for improvement identified during the review.

5.5 The recommendations from the group that will be taken forward to enhance future service delivery include the following:

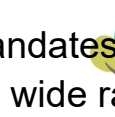
- To have one telephone number for customers to call to access all housing services, that is well advertised and accessible to everyone
- Introduce a customer satisfaction survey to measure the quality of the service outcomes from a customer's perspective
- Ensure similar focus on customer quality is given to all housing service requests, not just housing management calls, which are not currently in the remit of the "housing hub"
- Further review of translation services and their accessibility for officers and customers
- Regular reporting on first contact resolution and customer satisfaction alongside other metrics on service costs and call handling to ensure the focus on performance drives the best outcomes for customers.

6 Next Steps:

6.1 Housing Management have agreed to implement the recommendations set out above and will report back to the Tenant & Leaseholder Scrutiny Group on progress.

7 Alternative Options

7.1 The Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard mandates that social housing providers must ensure tenants are given a wide range of



opportunities to influence and be involved in the scrutiny of their landlord. Our Tenant Engagement Framework provides these opportunities. The quality of work undertaken by the volunteers who form the Tenant & Leaseholder Scrutiny Group adds significant value and benefit to the housing service.

8. Implications

Resources:	Financial, staffing, land/building implications <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are no specific resource implications arising from this report. The work of the Tenant & Leaseholder Scrutiny Group is met from existing resources in the Housing Revenue Account
Legal and Governance:	Legal implications including regulations/law under which proposals are required/permitted and constitutional provisions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Housing Regulatory Standards can be found at https://www.gov.uk/guidance/regulatory-standards).
Risk:	Risk implications, including any mitigating measures planned/taken, health and safety, insurance implications <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are no specific resource implications arising from this report.
Equality:	Implications for equality (all aspects and characteristics) including how meeting Equality Duty, equality impact assessments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The recommendations made by the Tenant and Leaseholder Scrutiny Group on access to the telephony service, especially for residents whose first language is not English will improve equality of service delivery when implemented.
Health and Wellbeing:	Implications of the proposals on health and wellbeing of our communities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are no specific health and wellbeing implications arising from this report.
Social Value	Implications for social value and how the proposals are meeting this (for e.g. employment of local traders, young people) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are no specific social value implications arising from this report.



9. Appendices

Appendix 1 Tenant & Leaseholder Final Report, Mystery Shopping Exercise and Staff Interviews

10. Background Papers

- Regulatory Standards - <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/regulatory-standards>

