

Report to Safer Neighbourhoods and Active Communities Scrutiny Board

23 March 2023

Subject:	Tenant & Leaseholder Scrutiny Group – Home Checks 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 “Home Checks” 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 latest area of work selected for scrutiny was the Home Checks undertaken by the Tenancy Management Service.



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

4 Home Checks Review

4.1 The Tenant & Leaseholder Scrutiny Group wanted to test and scrutinise the Home Checks service to ensure that the whole Home Checks process is fair, transparent, beneficial, and fit for purpose to all Council tenants and the Council. The group's aims are to suggest positive changes and improvements based on an evidence-based approach to ensure tenants have the best experience possible from the process



- 4.2 The Tenant & Leaseholder Scrutiny Group deployed a number of methods with the support of council officers to complete their review. This included a survey of tenants, staff interviews, and a desktop review of evidence.
- 4.3 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.
- 4.4 The recommendations from the group that will be taken forward to enhance future service delivery include the following:
- To provide copies of completed Home Check forms to all tenants who have received a visit;
 - review the main referral pathways to ensure these are most relevant
 - review our approach and access to interpreter services to ensure it reflects best practice
 - look at how we ensure Home Checks are accessible to all, including tenants who are at work during the day
 - ensure that the 'Dynamic Resource Scheduling' element is implemented as soon as possible to ensure appointments are managed and tenant friendly in terms of the availability of time slots
 - provide tenants with an explanation of the RAG rating, how it was arrived at and what this means going forward.

5 Next Steps:

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

6 Alternative Options

- 6.1 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.

7. Implications

Resources:	<p>Financial, staffing, land/building implications</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are no specific resource commitments 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:	<p>Legal implications including regulations/law under which proposals are required/permitted and constitutional provisions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Housing Regulatory Standards can be found at https://www.gov.uk/guidance/regulatory-standards.
Risk:	<p>Risk implications, including any mitigating measures planned/taken, health and safety, insurance implications</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are no specific resource commitments arising from this report.
Equality:	<p>Implications for equality (all aspects and characteristics) including how meeting Equality Duty, equality impact assessments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The recommendations made by the Tenant and Leaseholder Scrutiny Group on access to interpreter services will improve equality of service delivery when implemented.
Health and Wellbeing:	<p>Implications of the proposals on health and wellbeing of our communities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are no specific health and wellbeing implications arising from this report.
Social Value	<p>Implications for social value and how the proposals are meeting this (for e.g. employment of local traders, young people)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are no specific social value implications arising from this report.
Climate Change:	<p>There are no direct implications for climate change arising from this report.</p>



8.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Home Checks TLSG Report.
- Appendix 2 – copy of Home Check form

9. Background Papers

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

