



Notes of Meeting			
Subject:	Tenant and Leaseholder Committee		
Date:	29 th February 2024	Time: 7:00pm	8:30pm
Location:	MS Teams		
Attendees:	<p>Chair – Paul McMahon</p> <p>Staff – Natasha Beresford (Assistant Director- Housing Operations and Safe Communities), Simon Walton (Interim Head of Strategy, Quality and Assurance), Nonye Ebili (Improvement & Engagement Coordinator), Sue Prowse (Strategy, Quality & Assurance Projects Lead Officer), Ryan Glanville (Tenancy Management and Enforcement Manager)</p> <p>Committee members – Andy Forbes, Charlotte Palmer, Andrea Maloney, Mavis Cook MaC, Tracey Halls, Mutsa Cornish MuC, Max Sengul, Paulette Reed, Michelle Mitchell, Cllr Simy Dhyani</p>		

Item	Subject	Actionee
1	Welcome, apologies and changes in membership (If any)	Chair
	Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. No apologies	
2	Disclosure of personal and pecuniary interests	ALL
	No one declared any interests	
3	Minutes of previous meeting (including matters arising)	ALL
	Everyone agreed that the minutes were an accurate reflection of the meeting.	
4	Housing Management: General Policy Update	NB
	<p>NB explained there are new Regulatory requirements for all Social Housing Landlords commencing in April 2024. This has led to a series of Policy reviews which need to be scrutinised at TLC.</p> <p>NB explained that only one paragraph in this policy will need to be amended. Once amended, a full copy of the Tenancy Management Policy will be sent out to the members of the committee for comments and consideration.</p> <p>NB suggested that any items the members would like to see discussed in the upcoming TLC meetings, they should contact SP and team.</p>	

Item	Subject	Actionee
	<p>PM posed a question in relation to how many amended paragraphs the members of TLC will be receiving and when should they receive this paperwork. NB explained that there is only one amended paragraph and circulation of the paragraph will happen before the end of the week (1st March).</p>	<p>NB to circulate paperwork to members via SQA team.</p>
5	Mutual Exchange Policy	RG
	<p>Michelle Mitchell joined the meeting at 7:12pm</p> <p>RG shared a presentation which gave an overview of what amendments were proposed in the Mutual Exchange Policy (a copy of which is available upon request).</p> <p>Chair (PM) voiced concerns that there is a lot of information being given in one presentation. He suggested breaks may need to be included to give the members some time to understand the information being given and raise appropriate questions.</p> <p>In response, NB suggested that feedback from the TLC members on this will be fed back to the Council for a more balanced approach in the future.</p> <p>PR commented that online meetings are also quite difficult to see who has their "hands up". PM suggested all future meetings should be hybrid where possible.</p> <p>MM commented on a case she was aware of relating to the policy. In response, RG explained that the Council are unable to comment on personal cases due to potential issues around data protection (GDPR).</p> <p>MS had a question about how mutual exchanges can affect a tenant's right to buy and how arrears can affect a tenant wanting to apply for mutual exchange. In response, NB explained that a tenant will keep their years of discount as a tenant but could not claim discount from the other exchange. Basically, it's the same tenancy continuing. A tenant currently in arrears will need to pay off the amount before they can apply for a mutual exchange, but exceptional circumstances are taken into consideration.</p> <p>PR posed a question regarding whether Dacorum Borough Council (DBC) are unique to this policy amendment (not allowing an exchange which would result in an additional spare room) and how do they compare to other Councils.</p> <p>RG explained that this will bring DBC in line with the consensus of many other councils. DBC will consider all exceptional circumstances, but the Council want to avoid people obtaining extra bedrooms by default, to make the best use of the housing stock for current and future tenants.</p>	

Item	Subject	Actionee
	<p>There was a discussion around tenant alterations and how this falls into the mutual exchange process. RG explained that any alterations require prior written permission and any exchangee would be inheriting the responsibility regarding the alteration. This is made clear before the exchange happens, and it is not uncommon for retrospective permission to be sought for alterations before the exchange takes place.</p> <p>In response to MS question about what steps do the Council take to help a tenant that is currently in arrears and wants to downsize and both RG and NB explained that the Council works closely with their benefits team to produce the best outcome for the tenant within the policy framework.</p> <p>RG described the steps that the Council would take if the house a tenant wanted to move into, had been left in an unfit state by a previous tenant i.e. provide a written condition report and advice. The Council would offer additional support to the tenant during the mutual exchange process where appropriate.</p> <p>RG confirmed that the Council only have a mutual exchange and a transfer process in response to PR's enquiry.</p> <p>SD wanted confirmation whether the process would be quicker now that the policy has been amended to not allow an extra bedroom?</p> <p>In response RG explained that people will apply for the Housing Needs register or mutual exchange in the same way and their housing need will be assessed the same way as for all households on the housing register.</p> <p>PM has concerns that the new amendment in the policy may make families feel trapped in smaller houses and NB explained that the Council to utilise their stock in the correct manner and each case can still be assessed on a case-to-case basis.</p> <p>PM described a scenario where a tenant was unable to take care of themselves and then their property fell into despair. In response, NB gave an overview of how the Council would deal with these unique cases and work out an agreement that supported the tenant.</p> <p>The consensus within the group was that the changes for the mutual exchange policy need to be reviewed and made clearer.</p>	
6	Update on TPAS SMART Review	SW
	<p>SW shared a presentation explaining the TPAS findings following their review of resident engagement at DBC. SW thanked the group for the part they had played in the review, which had very much put tenant's views at the heart of the report.</p> <p>There was a clear need to build on what is working well, with special attention on Governance & Transparency and Scrutiny.</p>	<p>SW/NE TLC SP</p>

Item	Subject	Actionee
	<p>SW advised that TPAS will continue to work with us and have been engaged to complete a re-engineering programme and will get as many engaged residents to work as a collectively as possible. TPAS presentation to be shared with members [attached]. PM suggested that TLC raise three to four people from the group to represent TLC at the 'discovery session' with TPAS. It was agreed to send the TPAS invitation to be sent to all members regarding attendance, date, meeting details, etc. SP to ask TPAS if it was possible for any engaged resident unable to make the discovery session, to still be involved in the latter stages?</p>	<p>SP</p>
7	AOB – Date & time of next meeting	Chair
	<p>A member of TLC did not agree with the Council sending out <i>Thank You</i> vouchers at Christmas for their help and support during 2023.</p> <p>SW explained that he had decided to do it as a thank you for our engaged residents. It was acknowledged that the wording on the cards needed to be improved as it wasn't immediately clear where the voucher had come from. Two other members of TLC gave their views on the gesture in a more positive light; however, it was left that issues such as this would be left for the TPAS reengineering process in the next few months.</p> <p>21st March 2024 (Early to avoid Easter). This meeting will be operating as a hybrid meeting.</p> <p>Close</p>	