

Draft Cabinet response to recommendations of the Scrutiny Committee

The document sets out the draft response of the Cabinet Member to recommendations made by the Housing & Homelessness Panel. These recommendations were endorsed by the Scrutiny Committee on 12 April 2022 and were presented to the Cabinet at its meeting on 13 April 2022. The Cabinet is asked to amend and agree a formal response as appropriate.

Recommendation	Comment
1) That the Council identifies appropriate thresholds above which procurement or interview-focused ambassadors will be invited to be involved in the respective process.	<p>The Tenant Involvement Ambassadors and staff are in full agreement. Conversations have commenced with the Procurement Manager to determine practical steps; thresholds, outcomes and stakeholders.</p> <p>An additional training programme for Ambassadors is being drafted and the recommendation has been embedded within the Social Housing White Paper programme of work with timelines to August for go live.</p>
2) That the Council establishes a board with Cabinet member, senior officers and tenant and leaseholder representatives to meet on a regular basis to discuss tenant and leaseholder issues, and to report on progress and performance.	<p>Staff and the Ambassadors have signed off agreement with this recommendation of a Tenant & Leaseholder Board. Initial discussions have been held with the Executive Director and an early autumn 2022 advertisement internal and external communications campaign is proposed.</p> <p>There has been initial desktop best practice reviews of similar boards set up elsewhere, as well as a recruitment, interview and training process and retention plan. This will be presented to the Head of Service and Executive Director in summer 2022 to begin scoping the design of such a board and the governance remit.</p>
3) That the Council makes the greatest effort to ensure that tenant representatives on the board reflect the geographic and demographic diversity of the Council's tenants.	<p>This recommendation has been approved and signed off by Ambassadors and Staff. A Tenant Involvement Officer is conducting a resident mapping exercise based on wards, existing representatives and those to contact from the 2022 STAR survey. This will be published in the autumn Tenants in Touch magazine with the aim of ensure that the Board is representative of the tenant base.</p> <p>Every existing Ambassador is being met individually to design a Tenant</p>

	<p>Involvement Improvement Recruitment and Retention 2 year plan. The outcome of this will be a clear external communications plan and programme aimed at reaching out to communities and residents in poorly represented areas and increasing their engagement.</p>
<p>4) That the Council establishes the planned Housing Development Working Group as a matter of priority, that it includes within its scope issues relating to interior design of the homes built, and that a more precise name is agreed.</p>	<p>There has been an advertisement in the summer edition of Tenants in Touch promoting the “New Homes & Design Panel” providing the opportunity for tenants and leaseholders to apply.</p> <p>A job description and Terms of Reference have been produced for the panel and we will hold semi-formal interviews in autumn 2022. Each of our panels now follows a clear structure of training and development.</p>
<p>5) That the Council implements ways to recognise the contributions of tenant ambassadors which do not incur universal credit clawback or other benefit issues.</p>	<p>The sentiment of this recommendation is recognised, although this has previously received significant push back from Ambassadors.</p> <p>We already support digital inclusion by providing laptops/tablets and broadband to Ambassadors where needed.</p> <p>As of this year, we will however offer Ambassadors tickets to events, with examples being the Lord Mayor event, Town Hall Christmas Party and also consider the option of offering discounted memberships to OCC leisure centres or similar.</p>
<p>6) That the Council recruits more tenant ambassadors from younger age groups, particularly to participate in the Housing Development Working Group and Great Estates</p>	<p>This recommendation is accepted and action planning is in place through a re-vitalised community engagement plan and communications planning alongside the recruitment and retention improvement plan.</p> <p>It is anticipated increased connections with the community/ locality hubs and groups now more known to us, as well as the Grant Funding Programme and Healthy Living approaches will enable improved integration, advertisements, clearly demonstrating the benefits of being involved shaping council work outcomes.</p>
<p>7) That the Council recruits a tenant ambassador to represent the views of older, frailer residents.</p>	<p>We will follow the process referred to above and have recently completed the recruitment of an Ambassador from Singletree.</p> <p>We will continue to encourage other applicants from Older Persons Accommodation through this representative as our lead advisor.</p>

8) That the Council interrogates the data at ward-level from the census (when available), and the tenant satisfaction survey, alongside the knowledge of locality workers to develop a profile of the specific needs of each ward, and that this is shared with members and used to identify priorities for work planning at community level.	We will undertake cross tab analysis of the data at ward-level from the census (when available), and the tenant satisfaction survey, alongside the knowledge of locality workers to develop a profile of the specific needs of each ward, and that this is shared with members and used to identify priorities for work planning at community level
9) That the Council works to develop a distinct Housing identity.	We will consider the most appropriate approach to developing a brand which identifies “housing”. There are three potential scenarios that will be considered as part of this work: a) Housing Services, which includes Rough Sleeping, Homelessness, Allocations, Housing Options and many other prevention services; b) the wider landlord service, which includes ASBIT, Incomes, Sustainment, Repairs and Maintenance and Landlord Services; and c) the Landlord Services team which comprises the Tenancy Management and Involvement teams.
10) That the Council ceases to make reference to ‘customers’ or ‘clients’ in its reports unless the relationship is genuinely commercial.	Consultation will be carried out through Tenants in Touch and in discussion with Ambassadors to gather the views of the wider tenant and leasehold base on the preferences and accepted use of the various terms used both by this Council and other agencies.
11) That in the event that the Tenants Forum established by the DSS discrimination motion does decide not to pursue a joint Council and private rented sector structure, that the Council ensures that a Council Tenants Forum continues to be provided.	We agree that it’s important for our tenants to have access to such a forum and if the joint forum with private sector tenants does not appear to be sufficient we will look to support other options.
12) That the Council prioritises the collection of the KPIs required for distribution by the Social Housing white paper.	<p>In late summer the Regulator of Social Housing is due to publish new Tenant Satisfaction Measures and will provide clear guidance on the performance information that is required to be made easily available to our tenants & leaseholders. We will adhere to these requirements once published.</p> <p>A Project Plan for each of the seven Social Housing White Paper chapters has been generated to ensure that OCC achieve compliance. The Social Housing White Paper project is under way.</p> <p>An introduction to the Social Housing White Paper project is being published in the summer edition of Tenants in Touch. In this introduction</p>

	<p>we have committed to provide regular updates on progress and where compliance has been achieved, and the direction for each group/review.</p>
<p>13) That the Council publishes, in addition to the annual report required by the Social Housing white paper, live performance data on its website, and distributes performance details to tenants in each Tenants in Touch magazine.</p>	<p>We are currently investigating the potential of an ongoing/daily Transaction Survey Tender and Procurement programme as an addition to the annual STAR Survey and annual report.</p> <p>This would include the publication of results and how OCC would address our tenants and leaseholders feedback online and within Tenants in Touch.</p> <p>Discussions have already been held with our ODS and Property Services colleagues about the necessity of producing and publishing Building Safety information, as well as our requirement to produce Safety Case Reports for each of our high risk buildings next year.</p> <p>In addition we will investigate OCC's technical ability to publish live performance data digitally, with regular updates being included within Tenants in Touch quarterly.</p> <p>We will work to improve the website reach and accessibility for our tenants and leaseholders.</p>
<p>14) That in its reporting against Social Housing white paper KPIs the Council benchmarks against relevant comparators.</p>	<p>We will investigate the ability to benchmark our Social Housing White Paper KPI's against relevant comparators and work with Housemark on how this could potentially be achieved.</p> <p>We expect that once the Regulator of Social Housing publish the new Tenant Satisfaction Measures, this will include instruction on the publication of KPI's and any potential benchmarking requirements.</p> <p>We also expect the Regulators to publish further KPI requirements as part of the publication of the new Consumer and Decent Home Standards, Complaints Handling Code and through further Building Safety Act legislation.</p>
<p>15) That the Council reviews whether the structures to enable tenants to challenge areas of spend under the Social Housing white paper are sufficient to give</p>	<p>An Annual Report is being prepared and this will include a video link/QR code regarding the Housing Revenue Account spend. A series of training days and/or pre-recorded training videos on financial accounts</p>

<p>tenants meaningful challenge to Council spending.</p>	<p>will be offered to Ambassadors and uploaded onto the website to encourage all tenants and leaseholders to view and comment with feedback incorporated.</p>
<p>16) That the Council implements and promotes a clearer process for councillors and tenants to influence the spending of the Great Estates programme.</p>	<p>The Great Estates programme is well established and in its second year. Ambassadors and Councillors receive a short list of areas within the council which are put forward by a large variety of people: Tenants, Leaseholders, Police, Staff and Councillors.</p> <p>This short list of areas is matched against a matrix to assess priorities and is reinforced with a walk round of those sites with our Ambassador Group to ensure that they fully understand the scope, cost and possible improvements that could be made to each area. The Great Estates Project is regularly advertised in Tenants in Touch and emails from the Project Lead to Councillors offer invitations to put forward areas/schemes and attend the walkabouts and choice meetings.</p> <p>The residents in each chosen area are fully consulted before, during and post work completions.</p>
<p>17) That the Council implements a councillor casework system for housing issues within QL within 12 months.</p>	<p>Initial discussions have been held with Democratic Services around setting up a cross party group to understand specific member requirements for a casework system. This will also consider whether the existing provision of devices (laptops/tablets) to members is appropriate for mobile (on the doorstep) activity or whether additional or alternative devices are required and at a cost.</p>
<p>18) That the Council holds discussions with Thames Valley Police to determine whether additional resources for community policing have become available, and to propose reinstating Neighbourhood Action Groups or similar ward-based stakeholder meetings in priority areas if so.</p>	<p>The ASB team have committed to have discussions with Thames Valley Police to determine whether additional resources for community policing have become available, and to propose reinstating Neighbourhood Action Groups or similar ward-based stakeholder meetings in priority areas if so.</p> <p>This reinforces work the Tenant Involvement Team ASB review group are doing to improve the customer journey and a sense of satisfaction and understanding of what we all do working together.</p>

19) That the Council undertakes preparatory work with the Police to enable joint-working at a locality level to be established as quickly as possible.

ASBIT will have additional discussions with Thames Valley Police to establish realistic options of undertakings preparatory work to enable pro-active joint-working arrangements at locality level.

It is anticipated Tenant Involvement Staff would have part in these discussions and meetings going forwards. This matches well with our increased focus on community based engagement as a precursor for the new Customer Engagement Team and Complaints Team work.

Multi-agency working will increase community and neighbourhood understanding around Tenant and Leaseholder Safety expectations, and the requirements in the Social Housing White Paper for Tenants and Leaseholders to have their voice heard, have a community they are proud of, and to feel safe in their homes.