

## Tenant Involvement Group (TIG) Meeting Minutes 03.10.24

### Attendees:

Chris Pope, Service Manager – Housing Options and Tenancy Accounts

**Tenant Representatives:** Ann Cox, Alaine Willis, Brenda Freeborn, Chris Reynolds, and Paul Woodroof

**Tenant Engagement Team**

**Apologies from:** Alex Elliott, Melvin Utley, Sally Titley, Jane Cantillon and Brian Isaacson

Symbol	Description
?	Tenant question (for RI team to obtain answer to)
R	Tenant Recommendation
D	Tenant Decision
A	Action (for RI team / Tenant Representatives / NFDC Officers)

### Presentation from David Brown

*(Slides available on request)*

Dave updated the group on a consultation that the team were involved in at Willow Tree House.

A proposal was made from the council to have the age restriction lifted at Willow Tree House. The scheme has had some issues over the last 5 years with some ASB cases. Because of the current age restriction being over 45's only, it is restricting who can be allocated to these homes. Lifting the age restriction opens the properties for more suitable tenants to take up residency at the scheme and create more of a community at the scheme.

60% of tenants took part in the written consultation and a further 3 tenants engaged at a face-to-face engagement event. The common theme was that the residents weren't against the proposal of lifting the age restriction but were concerned about the ongoing management of the scheme and how the flats will be allocated.

#### ? How will the council improve the management of the scheme in the future?

- What is required is a clear local lettings plan, which needs to include how we are assessing prospective tenants for the scheme and making sure the scheme is highlighted to the allocations team due to previous concerns. Support offered for the incoming tenants if required also needs to be in place, if not with the housing team but with other local agencies. If the proposal is successful, then this can be considered as potential 'best practice' for other schemes that could also benefit from lifting the age restriction.

#### ? What are the regulation acts that housing is being governed by?

Working together with tenants

- We are governed by the Social Housing Regulation act. It came in to force in July 2023, the act ensures that we are more accountable to the Regulator and the Housing Ombudsman but also means that it is allowing our tenant to have more of a voice.

## **Presentation from Chris Pope**

*(slides available on request)*

### **WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

#### **? What does cuckooed mean?**

- Cuckooing is a practice where people take over a person's home and uses the property to facilitate exploitation.

#### **? Do you know how many people are over housed?**

- NFDC do not know how many current tenants have more bedrooms than they need. When properties are allocated, each tenant will be allocated the right sized property to meet their needs. Over time family sizes change. Many tenants hold a fixed term tenancy and so when the tenancy expires it is at that point an assessment is carried out to see if their need has changed and so many be offered an alternative property to meet their need.

#### **? Is the wording on the tenancy agreement due to be updated?**

- They are due to be reviewed this year. Kirsty being the new resident services manager has been tasked with revising the wording of the tenancy agreements.

#### **? How do the council know when previously brought council properties are up for sale?**

- If a previous tenant wants to sell their property that they brought via the right to buy scheme within the first 5 years of ownership they will have to repay some or all the discount they received to purchase the property. If they sell it within 10 years of purchase it will be in their contract to offer back to us before it is put on the open market.

#### **? Does the homeless team get any contributions to help towards the emergency funds?**

- All the funds that are paid towards emergency housing comes from the general council fund. We do get some funds back towards this spend from housing benefit and welfare contributions. We also receive money back from client contributions, clients are expected to pay towards the emergency accommodation. In most cases they get it at a discounted rate and aren't expected to cover the full cost.

The group thanked Chris for his presentation and for attending the meeting.

### **Dave's afternoon update.**

Tenant feedback Presentation (slides available on request)

Dave gave a presentation on 1 year's worth of 'tenant feedback' recorded by housing teams and officers.

**? The section that regards to 'decision and lack of action' , is this where the council have made a decision without consulting the tenant?**

- It could be where the council have made a policy related decision, for example relating to a repair that a tenant has requested. Currently we don't have any literature that states our service standards, which means that our tenants are not clear on what we will and won't do/repair. Tenants will naturally be dissatisfied if they phone up with a repair that they are not aware that we won't repair.

**? How will the council improve on its communication when dealing with works on a void flat or in a communal area.**

- My vision would be that the operative contacts the tenants either face-to-face or with a calling card that they can put through the tenant's door stating what area they are working on, times that they will be working there and how long the work is likely to take.

**? Will this service standard be for external contractors as well?**

- We can request that it is in their contract that they need to adhere to the same tenant engagement expectations that our operatives do.

Social Housing Regulation (presentation available on request)

Dave gave a presentation, prepared by Richard Knott for Informal Cabinet, outlining the Council's position on regulation, performance & consumer standards/inspection.

**? Do you think a lot of the Council's and Housing Association's that are C3's are in that position due to the lack of money?**

- A lot of the councils that have been reported as C3 have also reported that they are struggling financially.

### **Steve Davies – Housing Portfolio Holder**

The group had an open discussion about Steve Davies attending meetings more regularly in a more direct capacity. The group will then be able to provide their views, feedback and lived in experience directly to the portfolio holder for housing.

Feedback from the TIG:

- Could Steve attend an open discussion with the group rather than attend after a TIG presentation.
- Would it be better to have him attend and take over Dave's afternoon session instead.
- Could Steve provide updates from his previous visit.
- Steve should be going out with the group on visits – such as voids visits or ground maintenance inspections.

**Meeting ended**