

Comments of: Scrutiny Committee

Title: Feedback from the Tenants' Engagement Session

1. Introduction and Overview

The Scrutiny Committee hosted a tenants' engagement session following the Committee meeting on 25 April 2024. Senior Officers from the Housing Team were on hand to record the feedback received and that feedback has been collated into this document and can be viewed in section two. During the workshops, tenants were asked five questions and feedback has been received on those questions.

2. Summary of Feedback from Tenant's Workshops

1) What do you like about living in MBC housing?

- A tenant commented that they thought it was brilliant. St Johns Court looked nice and all the tenants stick together and help each other. There are 70 flats at St Johns court. Good quality flats, also Gretton Court is nice.
- Tenants are not frightened to voice concerns with the Council if things are not right.
- A concern was raised that at some meetings, Officers explain things that the tenants don't understand, but any questions or concerns are dealt with. An example given was the garden improvements that the Council are helping with.
- Tenants in attendance confirmed that they go to the Your Choice meetings and they know the staff.
- Tenants are aware of the Housing Officer for St Johns Court. They see her going to see people in the days and in the evenings as well.
- Confirm that there are ASB and drugs issues on the estate but that the Police have been really good. There sometimes appears to be a loss of communication between the Council and the police, although there is good communication between Council Officers.
- There is a good organiser with a community approach. They organise day trips out, like Doncaster and boat trip, having a film show every months.

- Communal room is well used but now a bit old, could do with new curtains and carpets.
- A tenant commented that they had an anti-social behavioural issue handled really quickly. The police and the Council came in and supported the tenant through it. The tenant loves his home and feels that they can contribute to it and feels this way because they are less time bound with other options.
- Comment was made that the Council could do more to publicise the website and the survey for future years.
- Another tenant recalled their positive experience. They were pregnant at 25 and the Council bent over backwards with helping her on an allocation. She then loved the home she lived in for 34 years with her family and all the repairs always got done. The tenant commented that they have now moved into a flat, which is a bit different to the house, but loves where she lives and there is no hassle. When the tenant reported mould issues and it was sorted quickly. A specialist came in and treated it and an extractor fan installed.
- A tenant commented that they felt that email, phone and letter are the best way to do the tenant surveys and asked if the Council could split the results by Ward. The tenant was advised that the surveys are anonymous, so could be difficult and would required a check against the technical specifications issued.

2) What have been the best changes over recent years?

- It was noted that flats being for over 60's only, although concerned about vulnerable younger people moving in. A tenant gave the example of younger person in a ground floor flat who walks with a stick but only sometimes, so an older person couldn't have that ground floor flat. Don't want younger vulnerable people getting allocated in the same area as over 60s.
- Tenants noted that, Sandra, the Senior Housing Officer helps out a lot. Tenants see officers a lot and know them all by name.
- It was noted that the Council are good at communicating with tenants and what had been discuss is interesting. A tenant stated that they enjoyed being involved with the Council.

3) What improvements would you like to see in next 12 months?

- A tenant commented that repairs are now better.
- Garden policy is needed to improve them and tenancy services enforcement needed. New tenants don't look after them, especially tenants in flats. When reported it was dealt with but after a while it went back to poor condition again.

- A tenant raised concerns over how the council as a whole contacts customers back. Raised about issuing all contact to the council reference numbers for contacts customers make.
- A tenant was surprised at what the team have to deal with from tenants. He was positive about what the Council are actually achieving from our your choice function and the you said we did part of it.
- A tenant witnessed two drug raids in the area of town centre, so they would like the Council to keep on top of the anti-social behaviour in the area and feels the area will keep improving if the Council continues to tackle anti-social behaviour.
- Comments were made that if people look after the area they live in, then people will respect it, and that we need more people caring about their environments.
- Tenants praised the gardening competition and the impact this can have on the above.

4) What longer term improvements would you like to see?

- Tenants commented that not a lot can be improved upon, although new windows would be good. At St Johns Court some community room improvements would be nice and the Council could invest more in community facilities.
- More scooter pods needed as there are now more people needing them and there are not enough. Could get at least four more scooter pods in on the available ground.
- Too many bins in some places for the number of people living there. Some issues with Biffa and the location of bins which could be fixed by moving bins around.
- Issue with pink and brown bags not being delivered for recycling.
- Tenants are very happy where they live. Only issues are with some individual tenants.
- On site warden looked after people, was a very popular service but that was removed.
- A comment was made that if the Council organise more in our areas, it will create ownership and the better an area will become.
- Asked if the council was considering the use of chat bots and satisfaction surveys on contacts with the Council as a whole.
- A comment was made that the Council needed to ensure it also collected the positive data, and that within the hundreds of contacts it has with tenants the majority go well.

5) How could we encourage greater involvement from other tenants?

- It was noted that not everyone wants to get involved. Council makes them all aware of things, but up to them if they come or not. Although the coffee mornings are popular.
- There was an annual event for tenants for the afternoon at the Council offices. About 100 people attended and there was a dance and play bingo. It was noted that this stopped due to Covid and it hasn't restarted.
- MADMAC (Melton And District Money Advice Centre) invitation to events are sent to all, but poor attendance.
- Jubilee events were organised and were popular.
- A suggestion was made that the Royal British Legion is a way of getting people involved by inviting them to hold events in communal rooms.
- A tenant commented that they are now being listened to and the Council are seeing the results.
- Tenants who do get involved will go back and share what they have learnt with other tenants.
- Garden competition was very popular.
- To get more people to Your Choice meetings need to build confidence and trust. Some people had lost confidence in the Council. Sometimes bureaucracy, same with the police.
- Acknowledged it is hard to get people to come to a meeting.
- Need to have trust in the Council to get more involved. People don't trust that things will happen.
- Need to share more information about what is going well.
- Historical repair reporting process involved hand-off from customer services and you can be 14th, 16th, 18th in the telephone queue but can now go and speak to someone directly which is much better.
- Must remember that not many people can use online services.
- Active tenants taking queries on behalf of others.
- Going to make better use of clear English.
- Fridge magnets for contact details was raised as an idea.
- Many tenants do not read things that they are sent, so they cannot say they didn't know.
- There is a feeling that good engagement is already happening but could happen a lot more, but that the Council's approach felt like it is going in the right direction.
- A tenant feels there are a variety of options available and the newsletters were very positive.
- There is a feeling the Council needs to provide a big action for tenants.

Written by: Scrutiny Committee Chairman in consultation with Members of the Scrutiny Committee