
TENANT PARTICIPATION COMPACT REVIEW

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 Members to review the Tenant Participation Compact Action Plan which has been updated following actions taken.

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 In 1999 the Government made funds available to Local Authorities to enable them to develop Compacts and encourage more tenants to become involved in the management of the properties in which they live.
- 2.2 In September 1999 the Tenant Involvement Steering Group (TISG) adopted a model for consultation and production of the Compact. The TISG relied heavily on the base model contained in the Government Good Practice Guide.
- 2.3 The Action Plan appended to the Compact is a general one for the whole of the District. Tenant representation comes principally from the Western part of the District (the Rochford and Great Stambidge Tenants Association having been disbanded in December 2000) and wholly from those who occupy sheltered housing or linked bungalows. Concern, therefore, has to be expressed that around 72% of tenants are unrepresented.
- 2.4 The Council has increased the establishment to include a Tenant Liaison Officer who is now in post. Regular meetings are taking place across the District to encourage more tenants to become involved.

3 ACTION PLAN

- 3.1 The Action Plan concentrates on ten key objectives, five of which were identified by all tenants in the Autumn 1999 Tenant Survey. They cover:-
- Working to reduce crime and disorder
 - Doing repairs quickly
 - Improving neighbourhoods
 - Keeping rents low
 - Improving older flats and houses
 - Consultation
 - Training
 - Political liaison
 - Performance monitoring
 - Tenant Participation and Compact development
- 3.2 The Action Plan is regularly reviewed and updated as part of the liaison process with the Tenant Representatives. However, with the modernising agenda and new Committee structure the TISG was dissolved in 2002. Responsibility for review now rests with this Committee.

- 3.3 Informal Member involvement has continued throughout 2002 as the then Chairman of Community Services Committee regularly attended liaison meetings. The updated Action Plan is attached for Members consideration. The sixth (last) column shows the latest position on each objective.
- 3.4 The emerging picture from the Plan is that lack of resources has prevented many of the initiatives being achieved on time. These have now been redated in the Action Plan with the original target date appearing in brackets. This is especially so as far as Tenant Group work is concerned. Much of the work falls on the shoulders of the Chairman of the Rayleigh and Rawreth Tenants Association with little support from his membership. This is an ongoing problem which is being addressed by the Tenant Participation Officer.

4 PROGRESS

- 4.1 A full complement of staff in the Housing Management Division will now permit some of the deferred work to progress without deterioration of the core services. Where appropriate, deferred work has been redated beyond the original planned completion date with the agreement of all parties.
- 4.2 This completes the Annual review of the Compact. The next review will be in Summer 2004.

5 RECOMMENDATION

- 5.1 It is proposed that the Committee **RESOLVES**

To note the amended Tenant Participation Compact Action Plan. (HRHM)

Steve Clarkson

Head of Revenue & Housing Management

Background Papers:

Good Practice Guide 1999

For further information please contact Clive Burton on:-

Tel:- 01702 318062
E-Mail:- clive.burton@rochford.gov.uk

TENANT COMPACT ACTION PLAN

This Action Plan shows how the Council (Officers and Members) and the Tenants and Leaseholders will progress the issues raised in it. It is framed around the Key Objectives prioritised by a Tenants Survey carried out late in 1999. This set the Agenda for improvement over the next few years.

The Participation Officer will review progress against the Action Plan not less than six monthly.

Objective	Tasks and Action	Who	Time Scales	Expected Outcome	4th Review
1. Working to reduce Crime and Disorder	a. Review Tenancy Agreement and strengthen areas associated with Crime, Anti-Social Behaviour and bad neighbourliness.	RDC	1 April 2000	Better policing of the Tenancy Agreement and action taken against transgressors.	Completed 1.4.00 and ongoing.
	b. Work together with other agencies to reduce the number of incidents of criminal damage, particularly vandalism and graffiti, on Council estates.	RDC + Tenant Groups	1 April 2001 (some reduction) 1 April 2004 (significant reduction)	Better environment in which to live. Reduce fear of crime.	Rochford Garden Way identified as a problem. Programme of regeneration works to commence August, currently out to tender. No other significant areas of criminal damage, vandalism or graffiti identified.

Objective	Tasks and Action	Who	Time Scales	Expected Outcome	4th Review
	c. Formulate a policy on abandoned vehicles on Council Estates.	RDC	1 October 2000	Areas cleared of dangerous vehicles and illegally parked cars/vans.	Reporting to Committee. Hoping for amnesty to hand in cars free of charge. Completed Feb 2001.
	d. Identify areas where improved estate lighting would make a significant contribution to tenant safety.	Tenant Groups	(1 December 2001) March 2004	All existing lamp columns functioning and new columns installed where necessary.	Monitor. At 1.8.01 no areas identified other than Clavering Court. New lighting for Hatfield House recommended by Crime and Safety Officer.
	e. Participate in the St. A.R. Project to improve the environment in St Andrews and Roche Wards of Rochford.	RDC + Tenant Groups	Ongoing to March 2004	Reduced crime levels. Reduced fear of crime.	Seemingly nothing identified by tenants for their estates. "Planning for Real" completed. TG & RDC trying to find local representation.

Objective	Tasks and Action	Who	Time Scales	Expected Outcome	4th Review
	<p>f. Highway improvements and better standards on estate roads and private parking areas.</p> <p>Survey "hot spots" and report to RDC.</p>	<p>Tenant Groups</p>	<p>(October 2000)</p> <p>Move to Apr 2004</p>	<p>Speed reduction.</p> <p>Better driving standards.</p> <p>Vacant parking places.</p>	<p>Move to April 2004</p> <p>At 1.8.01 no problems identified other than Coronation Close, Gt Wakering caused by narrow roads and refuse vehicles having to mount kerbs.</p> <p>Grass verges paved in Coronation Close to provide parking.</p> <p>New area identified in Ormond Avenue - Officers investigating costings.</p>
	<p>g. Better controls exercised over Drug and Alcohol Abuse.</p> <p>Better reporting of incidents.</p>	<p>RDC + Tenant Groups</p>	<p>Immediate and ongoing</p>	<p>Reduced evidence of abuse (inc needles).</p> <p>Less linked crime.</p>	<p>Included in Tenancy Agreement. Must not use premises to distribute illegal drugs.</p> <p>All reported incidents dealt with promptly by police</p>

Objective	Tasks and Action	Who	Time Scales	Expected Outcome	4th Review
	h. Include clause in Tenancy Agreement appropriate to Domestic Violence	RDC		Reduced levels of reported domestic violence.	<p>Problem in Middlemead – Report to Community Safety Officer which has now been resolved.</p> <p>All staff training by D.V. Officer completed.</p> <p>COMPLETED.</p>
	i. Forge closer links with other agencies to help prevent Crime and Disorder and Anti-Social behaviour	RDC + Tenant Groups	October 2000 and ongoing	New partnerships formed.	RDC working closely with Police, PCT, ECC Probation Service and Essex Fire and Rescue Service.
	j. Create a Housing Officer post specifically to address issues relating to working to reduce Crime and Disorder and to liaise regularly with tenant group.	RDC	<p>(October 2000)</p> <p>(Move to Apr 2001)</p> <p>Move to Mar 2003</p>	Officer in Post and working to reduce Crime and Disorder/liaison	<p>Monitor but move to April 2001.</p> <p>Incorporate in duties of Tenant Participation Officer as no identified need for specific officer.</p>

Objective	Tasks and Action	Who	Time Scales	Expected Outcome	4th Review
2. Doing Repairs Quickly	a. Review the existing arrangements for reporting repairs.	RDC + Tenant Groups	August 2002	Quicker response to repairs	Review completed 2002. COMPLETED.
	b. Review existing arrangements of canvassing tenants views on the quality of repair/maintenance	RDC	October 2000	Regular reports to Tenant Liaison Group on Performance	Suggested Return Comments by phone or postcard. Not to be completed in presence of Contractor. Completed July 2001. Telephone Survey now undertaken. COMPLETED.
	c. Try to reduce waiting times for repairs	RDC	December 2000	Regular reports to Tenant Liaison Group on Performance	Completed June 2001. COMPLETED.
	d. Introduce an appointment system for planned maintenance and improvements and monitor effectiveness	RDC	December 2000	Regular reports to Tenant Liaison Group on Performance	Complete April 2001. COMPLETED.

Objective	Tasks and Action	Who	Time Scales	Expected Outcome	4th Review
3. Improving Neighbourhoods	a. Identifying areas most likely to benefit from a proactive improvement programme.	Tenant Groups	December 2000	Schedule to be considered by Community Services Committee	<p>Tenant Reps concerned about windows at The Lavers and other environmental work.</p> <p>Included in Capital Programme 2001/2 Hedge Planting in Warwick Drive.</p> <p>COMPLETED.</p>
	b. Identify funding for areas of improvement such as landscaping, graffiti removal and better estate management.	RDC	January 2002 and ongoing	Report to Community Services Committee	<p>Some areas already identified and work completed as part of Estate Management Programme. Grounds Maintenance in Essex Close. Planting out recommended.</p> <p>Some areas planted out to improve estates and reduce nuisance.</p> <p>ONGOING.</p>

Objective	Tasks and Action	Who	Time Scales	Expected Outcome	4th Review
	c. Identify projects for community involvement, community halls, meeting places for young adults, mother and toddler groups, older citizen groups	Tenant Groups	March 2001	Better community spirit and 'good citizenship'	<p>Minutes/Agenda for all Committees/Council to be provided to Tenant Group Chairmen.</p> <p>No further projects identified at 1.8.01.</p> <p>Request for all Committee Reports received Feb 2003.</p>
	d. Ensure high standards of grounds maintenance and estate management. Clearance of rubbish when reported	RDC	(July 2000) July 2002 and ongoing	Customer survey with satisfactory results	<p>November 2000 Survey revealed high levels of satisfaction with tenants. Individual areas of improvement identified.</p> <p>New system/arrangement with refuse collection to remove all items from dustbin areas when collecting household rubbish.</p>

Objective	Tasks and Action	Who	Time Scales	Expected Outcome	4th Review
	e. Caretaker services extended to all areas of the District.	RDC	December 2000	Frequent and regular visits by Estate Caretaker - good visual presence	<p>On target – may be possible to expand.</p> <p>Rochford areas now covered on a regular basis.</p> <p>Caretaking services weekly in three areas - others covered as required.</p>
4. Keeping Rents Low	a. Undertake a fundamental review of the Housing Management function to ensure service is cost effective.	RDC	December 2001	Report to Community Services Committee or Auditors	<p>Review of management functions in progress.</p> <p>Project to conclude in December 2001.</p> <p>Rent restructuring implemented April 2002.</p> <p>Ceased to collect water charges April 2003.</p> <p>Best Value Inspections Review May 2003.</p> <p>COMPLETED.</p>

Objective	Tasks and Action	Who	Time Scales	Expected Outcome	4th Review
	b. Ensure that arrears are kept low and not a burden to good rent payers.	RDC	April 2000 and ongoing	Evictions where appropriate	On-going arrears reducing. 2002/3 98.8% collection rate. Consideration of transferring former tenants arrears to Revenue Team.
	c. Establish a policy to end long-term empty properties – maximise rental income.	RDC	October 2002	More rent collected	Programme for sheltered housing with bedsitting room. Flats to be refurbished to create one bedroom flats.
	d. Ensure all those entitled to Rent Rebate have it paid.	RDC	April 2000 and ongoing. Completed 2000 – ongoing	Take-up campaign Better Publicity	Include details in “Welcome Pack”. Estate Officer will also advise Benefits are available. Officer going on Benefit Course. Estate Officers have received basic training on housing benefits - Verification framework adopted.

Objective	Tasks and Action	Who	Time Scales	Expected Outcome	4th Review
	e. Ensure contractors are employed at the most competitive rates.	RDC	October 2000	Full review of contractors employed	On target. Completed October 2000. COMPLETED.
5. Improving Older Flats and Houses	a. Identify housing lacking and requiring central heating, provide full explanation of cost implication where refusal given.	RDC	October 2000	Report to Tenant Liaison Group	All tenants given opportunity for installation of gas central heating. Programme completed. COMPLETED.
	b. Identify housing lacking and requiring replacement windows.	RDC	October 2000	Report to Tenant Liaison Group	Programme completed. COMPLETED.
	c. Identify housing requiring major improvement works.	RDC	(October 2000) December 2003	Report to Community Services Committee	Decent homes survey to identify repairs Summer 2003.

Objective	Tasks and Action	Who	Time Scales	Expected Outcome	4th Review
	d. Identify funding for a, b and c above	RDC	December 2001	Report to Housing Committee	On target for submission of HRA Business Plan October 2003.
	f. Survey tenants asking what improvements they would like to see in the future.	RDC + Tenant Groups	May 2001	First priority to replace external doors with UPVC doors.	Replaced as required - ongoing at around £75,000 pa.
6. Consultation Matters	a. Develop and improve annual report and tenant news letter 'Your Home'.	RDC + Tenant Groups	Ongoing	More tenant related articles	Tenant Liaison Officer in post - more tenant involvement but still little evidence of tenants prepared to contribute.
	b. Undertake an annual consultation/survey exercise as in 1999. Analyse results	Rochford District Council Tenant Groups	August 2001 then August 2003	Report to Community Services Committee.	On target. Survey due August 2003.
	c. Aim to improve Membership to Tenant Groups in number, age spread and be participate	Tenant Groups + RDC	May 2001	Membership maintained at 1% +	Tenant Liaison Officer working to encourage more involvement.

Objective	Tasks and Action	Who	Time Scales	Expected Outcome	4th Review
	d. Consult on all matters relating to rights and obligations.	RDC	Ongoing	Better consultation even on minor issues	Monitor. Overarching need to encourage tenants to focus on wider issues.
7. Training	a. Staff and Tenants Reps to receive regular training on Tenant Participation	RDC	Ongoing	Better Trained and able to deal with issues	Monitor. RDC staff training complete. Tenants offered training courses but no take up.
8. Political	a. Establish strong links between Tenants reps and political policy in the decision-making process.	RDC + Tenant Groups	Ongoing annually in May	Committee Advisors nominated	Committee Advisor no longer attends Committees. Hoping to improve this situation.
9. Performance Monitoring	a. Establish a mechanism where Tenants reps. can monitor performance of Housing Management and Building Maintenance teams on a not less than three monthly basis.	RDC	(July 2000) December 2003	Quarterly reports produced.	QPRs now made available but Housing Inspectors say we need to develop other monitoring mechanisms - review.

Objective	Tasks and Action	Who	Time Scales	Expected Outcome	4th Review
10. Tenants Compact and Participation	a. Review the Compact on a not less than annual basis	RDC + Tenant Groups	Annually	Compact reviewed	On target for earlier years but no formal review undertaken in 2002/3 due to lack of resources.
	b. Council's policy on Tenant Participation reviewed annually and TISG Members to attend Liaison Meetings on a regular basis	RDC	Annually in October and ongoing	Policy Review and better Councillor attendance	TISG now deleted. Process passes to Parent Committee. During 2002/3 informal contact by Chairman of Community Services Committee.
	c. Council to reconfirm its "Equal Opportunity in Rented Housing" policy annually	RDC	Annually in October	Policy reconfirmed	No longer need for annual confirmation but new guidelines on BME groups considered Summer 2003.