

TITLE	The Tenants Charter – Modernising the Tenant Customer Experience within Wokingham – updated 2022
FOR CONSIDERATION BY	Full Council 27 October 2022
WARD	All Wards
LEAD VOLUNTEER	Steve Bowers – Chairperson of the Tenant and Landlord Improvement Panel (Tenant Volunteer)

OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY

In September 2019, the Tenant Volunteers came to the Full Council to present the first Tenant Charter. This shared their aspirations and the benefits to the community that working in partnership with the Tenant Volunteers could have.

Over the last few years, each September, the Tenant Volunteers have shared a report on the continued partnership work and to highlight the achievements over the years. Three years on – What we have achieved so far – is the final update report from the last Charter.

The updated Tenant Charter report has been created by the Tenant Volunteers and outlines the updated aspirations of the tenants.

Please see the attached report – The Tenant Charter update – 2022 and please watch the Tenant Charter video shared at the meeting.

RECOMMENDATION

- i) The Tenant Volunteers would like to ask the Council to consider the new aspirations outlined in the Tenants Charter update 2022 report and continue to work in partnership with them to achieve these.
- ii) The Tenant Volunteers would like the Council to note the Tenant Charter video.
- iii) The Tenant Volunteers would like the Council to note the report Three Years on – What we have achieved so far! This shows some of the projects, documents and reviews the Tenant Volunteers have been involved with in the last year.

SUMMARY OF REPORT

The purpose of the report is to formally update the Council on the progress of the work of the Tenant Volunteers, already completed over the last year. As well as share the new aspirations in the Tenant Charter update 2022.

This report was developed by the Tenant Volunteers and has been subject to review and approval by the Tenant and Landlord Improvement Panel.

The charter sets out the views of Wokingham Borough Council's Tenants on what is needed to modernise the customer experience and ensure continuous improvement. It is intended as a series of aspirations, rather than demands, and to stimulate a broader discussion within the council as a corporate body.

There are ten key priorities of Wokingham Borough Council tenants in the modernisation of housing services which are detailed in the Tenants Charter:

- 1) *Tackling the Stigma associated with being a Council Tenant*
- 2) *Communications with Tenants and Residents across the Borough*
- 3) *Greater Transparency regarding Health and Safety Inspection Results*
- 4) *Modernising Tenant Engagement Techniques to Increase Active Involvement*
- 5) *Identifying Future Patterns of Tenant Housing Need and Demand*
- 6) *Helping Tenants Manage their Personal Finances*
- 7) *Creating an easy 'friction-free' Customer Experience for Tenants*
- 8) *Maximising the Accessibility of Council Housing Services*
- 9) *Giving Tenants Greater Choice on who does repairs and when?*
- 10) *Developing a Protocol for the Analysis and Protection of Tenant Data*

The formal update report goes through each priority in detail to outline the thoughts behind each aspiration and provides some guidance and advice on how this may be achieved. The Tenant Volunteers would appreciate any help and support to achieve these.

BACKGROUND

The Tenant Charter was initially created and published by the Involved Tenants (now Tenant Volunteers) in 2019. In 2022, we (the Tenant Volunteers) reviewed the Charter and have identified several factors that make it timely to reflect on the future of housing services for council tenants and publish an updated version of the Tenant Charter:

- **The Grenfell Tower Disaster**
 - There have been emerging lessons from the Disaster and subsequent Grenfell Tower Enquiry. Notably the need for a greater focus on:
 - Health and Safety through the new Building Regulator,
 - Tenant Involvement working closely with the Regulator for Social Housing and Housing Ombudsman Service and,
 - Transparency over landlord decision-making ensuring that more information is shared with all Tenants.
- **The Social Housing White Paper**
 - The government's document '*The Charter for Social Housing Residents: Social Housing White Paper*' published by the Ministry of Housing Communities Local Government (now called the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities) was published in November 2020 and requests:
 - Enhanced consumer regulation applicable to councils and housing associations.
 - Landlords to raise service standards, levels of resident engagement and customer satisfaction.
- **Digital Transformation**
 - There are emerging opportunities for enhanced communications through digital transformation of service delivery and enhanced resident

engagement in respect of increased transparency and an improved tenant customer experience especially regarding accessibility.

- **Demographic Trends**

- Social trends such as an ageing population, increasing demand for disability and social care support, increasing customer expectations and the rapid rise of social media platforms.

We believe that Wokingham Borough Council and the tenants need to respond to these challenges by working together to plan for the modernisation of housing services over the next decade and beyond if:

- current levels of Tenant Satisfaction are to be maintained / enhanced / monitored, and
- opportunities to increase engagement are to be realised.

This charter sets out the views of Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) Tenant Volunteers on what we feel is needed to achieve the above and to improve the customer experience.

It is intended as a series of aspirations, rather than demands, and to stimulate broader discussions within the council as a corporate body.

Some of our proposals can be implemented relatively easily, some will require additional funding and others will require corporate agreement by full council.

Where suppliers are named, this is for illustrative purposes and does not constitute an endorsement.

We recommend that Wokingham Borough Council's progress in terms of addressing this Charter is formally reported to full Council each year and a full review completed every three years.

List of Background Papers
Tenants Charter update 2022 – Modernising the Tenant Customer Experience within the Wokingham Borough.
Three Years on – What we have achieved so far!
Tenant Charter video – to be shared at the meeting

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