



Tenant Engagement Refresh Update

Item 8D

February 5, 2024

Tenant Services Committee

Report: TSC:2024-07

To: Tenant Services Committee ("TSC")

From: Acting Chief Operating Officer

Date: January 26, 2023

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this report is to provide the TSC with an update on the implementation of the Tenant Engagement System Refresh.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

It is recommended that the TSC receive this report for information.

BACKGROUND:

In June 2022, TCHC developed and presented to the Board of Directors a four-step plan aimed at consulting with tenant leaders, receiving their feedback, and developing recommendations to make necessary changes to the Tenant Engagement System.

The plan included the following:

- I. Launch of Tenant Community Actions Table at the regional level;
- II. Establishment of a Tenant Advisory Committee;
- III. End-of-year Regional Forum; and
- IV. Launch of Citywide Tenant Forum in 2024.

The implementation of this transformative four-step plan is underway, demonstrating TCHC's commitment to enhancing tenant engagement and fostering positive change.

Tenant Advisory Committee

Throughout November and December 2023, the Tenant Advisory Committee (“TAC”) convened four times: two working sessions (November 14 and December 6) with the purpose of reviewing the Tenant Engagement System Volunteer Policy, the Tenant Engagement System Code of Conduct (the “Code of Conduct”), and the Breach of Tenant Engagement System Code of Conduct and two business meetings (November 22 and December 12).

At the November 14 working session, staff reviewed the Tenant Engagement System Volunteer Policy and accompanying procedures with TAC members. The discussion also included recommendations regarding the associated cost of vulnerable sector checks.

During the November 22 TAC meeting, a presentation on the review of the Tenant Engagement System was shared. TAC members had the opportunity to provide feedback following this presentation, where five recurring themes to the feedback emerged:

1. Improved Organizational Structure;
2. Inclusive Decision Making;
3. Enhancing Connectivity, Communication and Collaboration;
4. Reporting and Transparency; and
5. Training and Capacity Building.

The December 6 working session focused on the categorization of major and severe breaches to the Code of Conduct and ensuring that the procedural steps for breaching the Code of Conduct are fair, but concise.

At the business meeting on December 12, TCHC staff reconvened with TAC members to prioritize the recommendations stemming from the five recurring themes from the Tenant Engagement System review and to outline next steps. The meeting provided an opportunity for staff to present the finalized Tenant Engagement System Volunteer Policy and its accompanying procedures to the TAC members.

Several TAC members suggested a review of the ‘good standing’ requirement in the Tenant Engagement System’s Code of Conduct. Specifically, they proposed eliminating the requirement for tenants in arrears to have a repayment agreement to volunteer. In response, management revised the policy, considering feedback to include tenants with recent records of anti-social behaviour or behaviours falling under the

Eviction for Cause Policy. Consequently, management has decided to adjust the Tenant Engagement System Volunteer Policy to allow those in arrears to fully participate in the engagement system without requiring a repayment agreement.

Update on the Tenant Engagement System Volunteer Policy Policy Development and Tenant Consultation

The Tenant Engagement System (“TES”) Volunteer Policy serves as a framework to support the work of elected, acclaimed, and appointed tenant volunteers in engaging within the TES. The development of the policy and procedures seeks to formalize tenant participation within the TES, establishing mutual accountability between TES members and TCHC staff.

Previously established procedures related to tenant engagement, such as the Tenant Representative Code of Conduct (January 2010), and Removal of a Tenant Representative (November 2011), are outdated and do not align with the current staffing and approach to tenant engagement at TCHC. The TES Volunteer Policy reinforces accountability for both tenants and staff, recognizing tenants’ invaluable contributions to their communities.

Developed by management in 2023, the Tenant Engagement System Volunteer Policy and associated procedures (TES Code of Conduct Procedure and Addressing Breaches to the TES Code of Conduct Procedure) were shaped by feedback from tenant consultation sessions in 2022 and consultations with TAC in 2023.

For the past few years, the Tenant Volunteer Policy has been an item on the TSC’s work plan. After consultation with internal stakeholders, it was determined that a focused volunteer policy, rather than an overarching policy for all of TCHC, is more effective. The Tenant Volunteer Policy was removed from the TSC’s work plan, receiving Executive Leadership Team (“ELT”) approval, in compliance with TCHC’s Board-approved Policy Management Framework, for an operational level policy specific to tenants volunteering through the tenant engagement system.

ELT has recommended that divisions working with tenant volunteers establish their own divisionally specific policy and/or procedures to govern how they engage with tenant volunteers.

Tenant Community Action Tables

The Tenant Community Action Table brings together a diverse group of stakeholders who collaborate closely with tenants, staff, and partners. Its primary objective is to address tenant-identified priorities within each community, forming the Tenant Community Action Table. To achieve this, the following key objectives have been established:

1. Share information and resources;
2. Build a Community of Practice; and
3. Capacity building of community representatives.

Tenant Community Action Tables – Q4 2023 Summary

In Q4 2023, the Tenant Community Action Table meetings took place across all three regions (East, Central and West), culminating in a year-end celebration focused on volunteer recognition.

The Tenant Engagement System operates on volunteer participation and the final Tenant Community Action Table expressed gratitude to tenant leaders for their dedicated contributions to their buildings and the broader TCHC community, acknowledging their time and skills.

Community representatives and building committee members were presented with a certificate for their participation in the tenant engagement system and contributions to enhancing their building/communities.

Update on the Review of the Tenant Engagement System

During the November 22, 2023 TAC meeting, the review of the Tenant Engagement System was discussed with members. At the meeting, the TAC provided feedback and suggestions for inclusion in the final review report.

During the December 12 meeting, TAC members received and reviewed proposed recommendations derived from TAC and general staff, stakeholder, and tenant feedback, which was gathered throughout 2023. At the meeting, additional recommendations were made and TAC prioritized the proposed recommendations. Their priorities will be reflected in the final review submission scheduled to come to TSC in April.

Next Steps

- TCHC is committed to promoting tenant involvement, fostering communication, and improving the overall tenant engagement experience within TCHC. TCHC will:

- Launch tenant funds for common area projects survey;
- Host TAC consultations on a service hub review and Human Rights policy;
- Plan for Q1 Tenant Community Action Table.
- The review of the Tenant Engagement System and the recommendations will come to the April Tenant Services Committee.

Implications and Risks

The City's Shareholder Direction requires TCHC to maintain a democratic system of active tenant participation and involvement that will provide the following:

- Opportunities for tenant engagement regarding their housing and the complete TCHC housing portfolio;
- Opportunities for tenants to provide input on TCHC corporate decisions, including capital plans, operating budget, service levels, service delivery and Tenant facing policies; and
- Opportunities for tenant input on setting local spending priorities; and
- Information about opportunities for engagement in other City and community initiatives.

In addition, TCHC's approach to tenant engagement will respect the terms of the Shareholder Direction and the financial targets and performance benchmarks established for TCHC by the Service Manager.

SIGNATURE:

"Nadia Gouveia"

Nadia Gouveia
Acting Chief Operating Officer

STAFF CONTACT:

Julio Rigores, Manager, Tenant Engagement Refresh
416-981-4271
Julio.Rigores@torontohousing.ca