



Scrutiny Review into Asset Management (Prioritisation) at Selwood Housing June 2024

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1. Introduction & Objectives

Following on from the amendments which were made to the [Social Housing \(Regulation\) Bill](#), which are intended to raise standards in the social housing sector and hold landlords to account over the services they provide to their tenants, we conducted a review into Selwood's major asset programmes with a particular focus on the prioritisation process.

During previous reviews the Scrutiny Team had asked questions around repairs and how Selwood managed some of its major asset programmes, such as Roof, Windows, Bathrooms and Kitchens.

Because of this interest the Scrutiny Team decided, in agreement with Selwood's Customer Involvement and Communities team, to undertake a review of Selwood's major asset programmes with a particular focus on the prioritisation process.

The Scrutiny Team offer their recommendations with the aim of improving Selwood Housing's major asset programmes process and procedures, providing a comprehensive customer faced viewpoint.

The Scrutiny Teams aim is to improve the upgrades to customers' homes process, and to increase customer knowledge of the subject.

The main objectives for this review were:

- To understand how Selwood Housing currently manage its major asset programmes. What is entailed in deciding which assets require replacement, and which policy and procedures they follow to ascertain this

- Focus on how Selwood prioritise upgrades to customers' homes within the resources available to them
- What are customers' expectations and needs when contacted by Selwood Housing informing them that they are part of renewal programme
- Does Selwood meet these needs and expectations?

2. Methodology

The Scrutiny Team, with support from Selwood's Involvement and Communities team, decided on a dual approach to obtaining information for this review.

- Research: This took the form of a presentation by Selwood's property teams. Investigating what the legal requirements were, what was the current state with Selwood Housing, and what best practice looked like. Further information was obtained from documents provided by both Selwood and Tpas.
- Workshops: These took the form of inviting customers to attend a presentation by the property teams and getting their participation in discussions and receiving their insights and suggestions

3. Findings

We were given information from the Selwood property management team and a two-hour presentation with discussion and questions.

We then looked at questions and views that were raised at the workshop by both customers and Selwood staff.

Below are our initial findings:

Workshops: Customers along with Selwood property management team were invited to participate, which took place on the 9th and 15th May 2024. It was facilitated by Selwood's Customer Involvement and Communities team supported by members of the scrutiny team.

The workshop took the form of; presentations from Selwood's in-house property management team; table discussion/workgroups; feedback sessions, and a question-and-answer sessions.

The workshop was seen as very useful for those who participated, and the feedback and information collected from the workshops formed the basis for our recommendations (which can be found in section 4).

Research: Following on from receiving the evidence, obtained from our research tasks as described above: and the workshops, we examined...

- Copies of the various letters Selwood send out
- Copies of the various letters that Selwood's contractors send out
- Copies of processes used
- Anecdotal information from Customers

The Scrutiny Team then held several online and in person meetings. During these meetings, both the literature provided as well as real world experience from customers was discussed. This included many of the points raised within our recommendations.

It is key to note that throughout this process Selwood has been keen to provide all information requested by us, for which we thank them. The scrutiny team believe that in general there are no major changes to be made within the documentation, but more a series of tweaks to improve the overall ease to which customers can understand these documents.

4. Recommendations

The Scrutiny team found that Selwood's processes for prioritising their major change programs were sound and could find little to change in the actual prioritisation process.

What was highlighted was that there were shortcomings in the communications that customers received, which may lead to customers requirements and expectations not being met.

The recommendations below are presented to Selwood Housing for consideration in seeking constant improvements to their asset management communications.

The key recommendations to take from this review are as follows,

1. The wording of many documents needs to be simplified and made into plain English – in line with the plain English standard.
2. Ensure that all documents relate time in the same manner, i.e. if using financial year, specify when it runs to.

3. It is essential that ALL contractors are aware of time in the same way (following on from 2 above), so all parties should use a standard time period, rather than one operating April-March and another January-December
4. When communicating with customers we felt that they should receive a fair warning letter of intention to do the works on a given date. This letter would follow the initial pack sent to customers advising them of any planned works.
5. Ideally a timescale should be provided to customers so that they can plan in advance for any works.
6. A review of all media used in documentation should be undertaken to ensure customers know what they can expect, as an example, in the kitchen leaflet it shows a mixer tap, but Selwood's guidelines state like for like and mixer taps are not routinely installed.
7. We also felt that there should be bullet points outlining any key information or key dates, so that customers attention is drawn to them.

The Scrutiny Team would again like to express our thanks to Selwood for the speed in which they have provided information and assistance to us and we hope that they are able to make the changes suggested in the same manner.

The Scrutiny team and Selwood Housing have worked together to instigate changes that we hope will improve both the customer experience, and the service to their customers

The Scrutiny team would like to thank the customers and staff of Selwood Housing for their contribution and cooperation during our review into Asset Management Prioritisation Processes and Procedures.