

Customer & Communities Committee



1. Cover Report

Date	4/4/2024
Agenda Item & Title	Scrutiny Mutual Exchange Review
Report Ask /Purpose	For Discussion
Forward Planner	Standing Item Quarterly Information
Report Author Email/Mobile	Tanique Daley, Customer Insight Coordinator Tanique.Daley@msvhousing.co.uk 07703807200
Confidential	Not Confidential
Recommendation	Members are asked to note and comment on the report.

Fits with Corporate Plan



Narrative:

Link to Strategic Risk Register

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1. Customers	<input type="checkbox"/> 2. Safeguarding Tenants
<input type="checkbox"/> 3. Health and Safety Compliance	<input type="checkbox"/> 4. Income Collection and Customer Financial Hardship
<input type="checkbox"/> 5. Government Policy	<input type="checkbox"/> 6. Sector Reputational Risk
<input type="checkbox"/> 7. Cyber and Data Security plus GDPR imp	<input type="checkbox"/> 8. Business Continuity
<input type="checkbox"/> 9. Long Term Funding	<input type="checkbox"/> 10. Financial Viability
<input type="checkbox"/> 11. Growth & Partnerships	<input type="checkbox"/> 12. Development
<input type="checkbox"/> 13. Asset Management	<input type="checkbox"/> 14. Property Services
<input type="checkbox"/> 15. Safeguarding Staff and Loss of Skills	<input type="checkbox"/> 16. Regulatory and Legal Compliance

Risk & Risk Appetite	No associated risks.
Customer Voice & Insight	Scrutiny panel led by MSV customers, using customer insight to carry out the reviews.
VfM	Neighbourhood services remain under review to ensure VFM is achieved in operational delivery and forms part of MSV's VFM strategy.
Financial Implications	Financial implications from any recommendations are managed by the Neighbourhoods and Communities directorate. Controls are in place to ensure spend is monitored in year spend to manage any potential overspends.

EDI Impact	Equality, diversity, and inclusion underpins all work undertaken by Scrutiny and the services are tailored according to the customers' needs.	EIA Attached?	NO
Environmental & sustainability	Neighbourhood services remain under review to ensure all operations consider the environmental and sustainability impact.		

1.1 Executive Summary

Customer volunteers from MSV's Scrutiny panel carried out a review on our Mutual Exchange process from February to April 2024. The report provides a summary of the review and recommendations based on the findings.

2. Report

Introduction

MSV's Scrutiny panel is a collective group of customer volunteers who are interested in helping us to improve our services. Eleven members of the group volunteered to participate in this review.

Since this review started, we have recruited two additional customers who have joined the Scrutiny 'pool', lost three, taking our membership to 14 customers. Members can select the reviews they would like to take part in, allowing them to volunteer at times to suit their own personal commitments. The customer members voted in a new Scrutiny Chair in March, who will be leading the group over the next year.

Members have been proactive this year, participating in and supporting MSV in several consultations. These include reviewing the new complaints policy and procedure, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy, the new MSV Way and the full consumer standards consultation.

Aims of the Review

Following a complaint linked to Mutual Exchanges and upcoming changes in regulation, the process of our Mutual Exchange was referred to the panel as an area to review. The scrutiny panel agreed to explore the customer journey focusing on the mutual exchange experience from start to finish, identifying any gaps in the service.

This included:

- Accessing all relevant policies and procedures.
- Scrutinising all letters, leaflets and forms.
- Establishing how effective communications sent to customers are related to the mutual exchange process.
- Explore methods used to contact customers.
- Explore best practice in relation to EDI.

The Review

The exercise launched in February 2024, to enable the panel members to carry out a thorough review of the service area, we sought documents and liaised with key colleagues throughout, including:

- Mutual Exchange policy and procedure
- Communications sent to customers
- Application form and all letters
- Landlords' inspection form
- Interview with the Lettings and Neighbourhood Managers
- Information provided on the website and mutual exchange application data.

Members scrutinised the information provided, which led them to interview colleagues from across the business to gain further understanding about the current service and answer any questions or queries. Two colleagues from Neighbourhoods took part in the face-to-face discussions.

Findings and Recommendations

The group highlighted the following areas of good practice:

- The Mutual Exchange policy and procedure is well written, detailed, robust and covers all aspects of EDI.
- The repairs leaflet was very informative and useful.

The panel developed a list of recommendations to be considered, which have been reviewed by colleagues in Neighbourhoods. Based on the review findings, the panel would like to recommend the following changes to help improve the customer experience when processing a mutual exchange.

1. Improve the way we advertise the Mutual Exchange process to ensure all customers have access to the information and are informed:
 - MSV must advertise the mutual exchange process in the quarterly newsletters to all tenants and make this a regular feature. This is including the Moss Side newsletter.
 - MSV should advertise the service on different platforms other than House Exchange, this includes all relevant social media platforms.
 - MSV should post information about the Mutual Exchange on communal notice boards where we have them.
 - MSV must produce an easy read leaflet using both written and visual communication about the mutual exchange process. This leaflet must include useful information about the process, the reason a customer may be refused an exchange, useful contact information and a website. The leaflets should be shared at signups and made available at all community hubs/drop in sessions and offices.
2. Improve the digital offer to customers.
 - MSV should create a digital offer for all customers. This includes providing a streamlined digital service across all areas of operation, where customers can access information and complete all forms digitally.
 - Provide all staff with the relevant digital equipment and resources, e.g. a tablet to enable them to carry out mutual exchanges with customers online. This will enhance efficiency, reduce duplication and administration for staff.
 - Update the MSV website with a dedicated page for Mutual Exchange.
3. MSV must promote and enhance the different translation tools they have available to customers. This will raise awareness and understanding and ensure all customers have access to the correct information, especially where English is not the first language.

Neighbourhood Update

The recommendations form part of MSV's Neighbourhood commitment to improve services and the customer experience. This is done by ensuring the customer voice is at the heart of what we do and is reflected throughout the business.

The mutual exchange process must be updated to reflect the customer's voice and needs. Included in the recommendations are key themes to improve the service by focusing on people and ensuring services are accessible for all. By creating a digital offer for customers and promoting the service we will increase awareness and understanding of the process and create a level playing field for all customers to access important services. Providing customers with a choice regarding their rehousing and access to service provision.

Our Neighbourhood teams continue to deliver key frontline services for our customers and will continue to do so at a time when demand on services is increasing. They continue to adapt to the needs of the business and customers, by proactively looking at the way they work, being flexible in their approach and building capacity amongst the teams.

Several key actions have been completed to improve services:

- Ongoing training regarding consumer standards and TSMs.
- Improving capacity linked to data and insight.
- More collaboration amongst departments/teams e.g. Nibbles and Natter.
- Co -creation of key strategies, policies and procedures.
- Enhancing partnership work in anchor neighbourhoods. e.g. Environmental Champions.

Next Steps

- The Scrutiny Panel will receive quarterly updates relating to the recommendations outlined for the mutual exchange from department leads, first update due in July 2024.
- Work with panel members to review the process used to carry out the review, implementing any improvements on any future work of the group.
- Scrutiny to receive a copy of the final draft of the new mutual exchange leaflet.
- Scrutiny panel to receive specific deadline for recommendation outlined.
- Two scrutiny members to attend the TPAS conference in Coventry 11-12 July 2024

MSV to launch instruction video on website regarding process and shared with members.

3. Recommendation

To approve the recommendations made by MSV's Scrutiny Panel.

4. Further Supporting Information

Appendix 1 – Full panel recommendations