

HOMES & COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

13 SEPTEMBER 2021

PHASE TWO CONSULTATION OF TENANT ENGAGEMENT UPDATE

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To update members on the progress made with regards to the consultation and implementation plan of tenant engagement in housing services.

2.0 Background Information

- 2.1 Members will recall in January 2020, the Homes and Communities Committee approved a root and branch review of tenant engagement following the re-introduction of the former Newark and Sherwood Homes into the general housing service.
- 2.2. The report was specific in terms of the scope. Stating the *'review will need to look at all levels of tenant and leaseholder engagement, including how tenant and potentially leaseholder representatives can effectively engage with the Homes and Communities Committee and the Committee can demonstrate that it is taking all tenants' views into account. The proposals set out in the paragraphs below suggest an interim arrangement whilst the review takes place. This will ensure that during this interim period there is a mechanism by which tenant representation can be fed into the Homes and Communities Committee'*.
- 2.3. In November 2020, we recruited a Tenant Engagement Officer to work with tenants in housing services and to start phase one of the review.
- 2.4. A desktop review was undertaken throughout January, and regular meetings were held with tenants and officers to look at what currently was being provided and what tenants felt worked and didn't work.
- 2.5. A final phase one report was presented at this Committee in March 2021, outlining findings and suggesting that a further Tenant Engagement Officer was needed to assist with the tasks ahead and to help with capacity building of the existing involved tenants. This also considered the requirements of the Housing White Paper and digital opportunities for tenants to become involved in.
- 2.6 Phase two of the review started in March 2021, and this was to look at opportunities for involvement and what tenants feel we need to engage with them successfully.
- 2.7. Regular meetings with tenants have been held each week to discuss various options for engagement and also to help monitor services. Staff have also been contacted to ascertain their views and contact feedback has been received from the Tenant Participation Advisory Service and the Association of retained Council Housing. All of whom have provided very positive feedback on the proposed opportunities for involvement.
- 2.8. A document has been compiled detailing the opportunities for tenants to engage with housing services and this is being sent through the rent statements in October 2021. Feedback is being requested on what tenants and leaseholders think and they will have the chance to outline any other ways in which they want to engage with us.

2.9. A final committee report, together with a draft Tenant Engagement Strategy (outlining the opportunities) will be presented to this Committee in January 2022, which will take into account the views of our wider tenant base as well as our involved tenants and officers and seek to ratify the proposed new engagement structure. It will also ensure that best practice has been adhered to, and fit in with the proposals from the white paper, the National Tenant Engagement Standards and the Government's Consumer Regulations on Tenant and Leaseholder Engagement.

3.0 Proposals

3.1 That the consultation with tenants is noted;

3.2 That a final report on the engagement structure is presented to Homes and Communities in January 2022 to ratify tenant's views on opportunities for engagement

3.3 That the final proposals once agreed are implemented within a Tenant Engagement Strategy.

4.0 Digital Implications

4.1 The proposed opportunities on offer to tenants involve both actual and digital means of engagement. Currently our tenant forum members are being trained to train other tenants on the use of digital media and we have a number of sessions planned at the Community Hub. As part of this training, a guide booklet on the use of digital media is being developed by the trainers to give out to all tenants so that they can engage at a level to suit them. This is in line with the Digital Declaration pledge providing digital opportunities for citizens to engage with us at level that suits them. It is envisaged as the process develops, more resources will need to be identified to ensure that the level of digital involvement increases.

5.0 Equalities Implications

5.1 There will be a range of people from, for example different backgrounds, nationality, religions, across our tenant and leaseholder base. All communications and engagements will need to be targeted appropriately so as to reach a range of communities.

6.0 Financial Implications FIN21-22/3623

6.1 There are no financial implications for the current financial year, however, for 2022/23 there will be a need to increase the Tenant Participation budget by £25k due to the many opportunities the Council are proposing, including the roadshows.

7.0 RECOMMENDATIONS that:

a) **Members are asked to note the progress in the implementation of the Housing Services tenant engagement review;**

b) **Support the proposal to implement the views of tenants and leaseholders into an engagement strategy to be presented to committee;**

- c) Members support the recommendation of the additional budget provision of £25k for 2022/23, which will be incorporated into the budget setting process.**

Reason for Recommendations

To update members on the review into tenant and leaseholder engagement and the actions arising from it.

Background Papers

Opportunities for Involvement Document V6.

For further information please contact Julie Davidson on Ext 5542

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