

HOMES & COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

14 MARCH 2022

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 for 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 Housing Health and Well Being Directorate.

2.2 The report for phase one 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.

2.3 Phase two of the review started in March 2021, and this was to look at all of the opportunities for tenant involvement and to understand how tenants would like us to engage with them successfully.

2.4 A tenant survey went out with the rent statements in October 2021, providing an opportunity for tenants and leaseholders to inform us how they would like to get involved and have their say. The response rate while informative was relatively low. 79 forms were returned of which 55 were complete and provided 37 new tenants interested in getting involved. This may also be indicative that this is not the most effective means of engagement in itself.

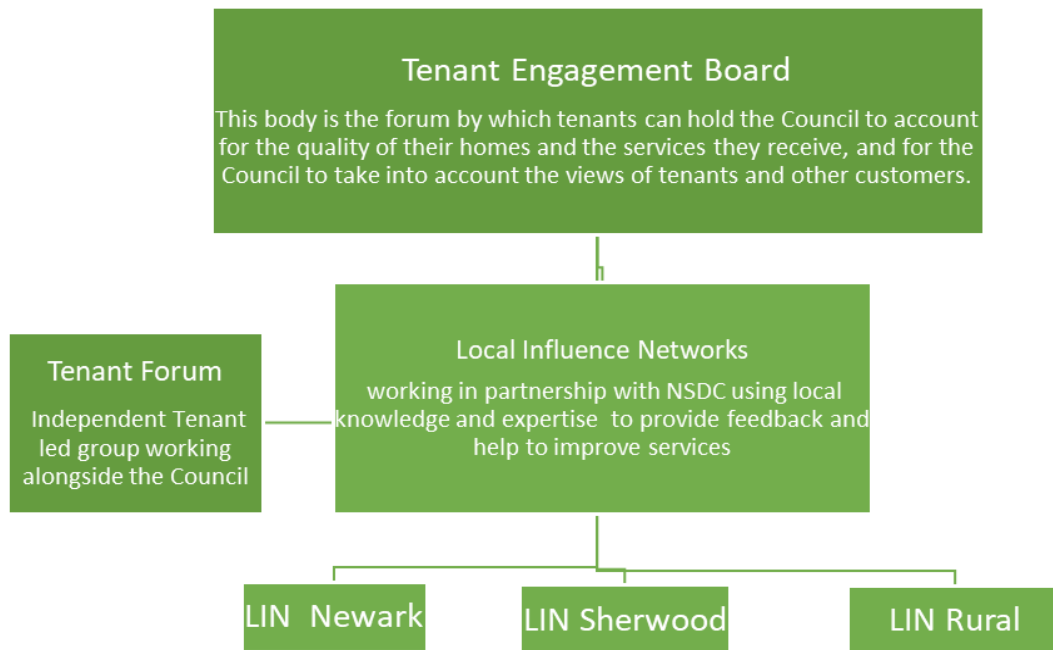
2.5 In light of the poor survey take up we decided to expand on the results engagements, officers have also utilised a variety of other methods to engagement with tenants. These included following up the initial contact in 2020, connecting with community centre groups, face to face events e.g. seasonal celebrations, Chatham Hub events, getting to know you referrals and wider resident engagement such as safer streets and food clubs. TEOs have ensured that every contact has involved an opportunity for tenants to engage and get involved. This have proved to be an effective way to both get tenants involved and get meaningful feedback.

2.6 We now stand at around 90 involved tenants at different levels of engagement across the district and we now have 16 involved tenants on the Tenant Forum.

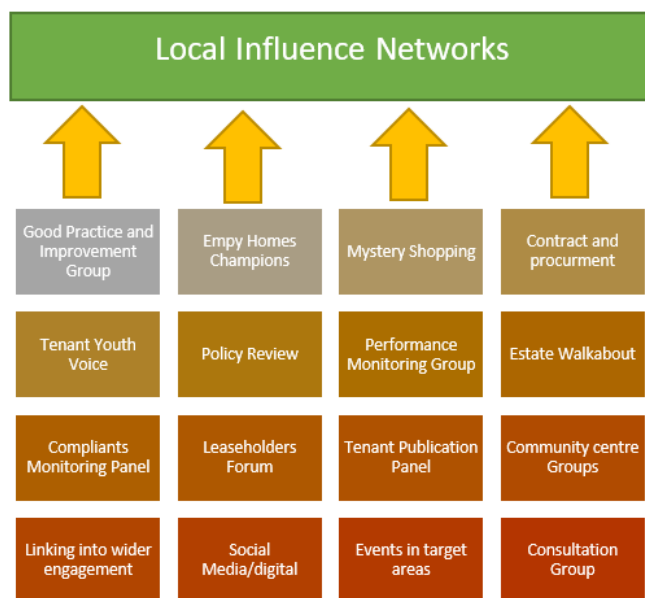
2.7 A common theme is that tenants often express a desire to get involved on a local level and provide feedback and expertise on the area they live in. This feedback supports the introduction of local Influence Networks (LIN). It is proposed that there will be three networks one in Sherwood, one in Newark and a rural network for the outlying villages. These networks provide opportunities for satellite groups to meet outside of the LIN meetings and that tenants can then feed their views into the LIN.

We currently have around 12 people wanting to be part of the Sherwood and Newark LIN and five tenants interested in the Rural LIN, which will serve the outlying villages. There is an expectation that representatives from each LIN will apply for the new Tenant Engagement Board (part of the new governance structure) later in year.

2.8 Tenants and leaseholders have also indicated they are keen to keep in touch via a newsletter; we now have a tenant consultation group keen to be involved in online and telephone surveys. Mystery shopping was also popular along with getting involved in reviewing services. In light of the information received, we have the following proposed structure.



2.9 It is proposed to offer the following engagement opportunities to strengthen and grow tenant engagement across the district.



2.10 We have already been able to offer new involved tenants the opportunity to participate in the following projects:

- Efficiency savings Review
- Contract procurement for the voids clean and tidy contract
- Anti-social behaviour policy review
- The void inspections
- RSH Tenant Satisfaction Measures
- Review of proposed Tenant Engagement Board
- Setting up new tenant groups in the Community Centres (such as coffee mornings , food clubs and community gardens)

2.11 The Tenant Engagement Team is working on a social media plan to connect to tenants that prefer these channels. We are also planning to target communities where there is little or no involvement currently with pop up events and working alongside tenancy officers to promote take up.

3.0 Proposals

3.1 It is proposed that the Council adopts the new tenant engagement structure, which includes the establishment of three Local Influence Networks as set out in 2.8 and 2.9.

3.2 Also to continue to use the Tenant Engagement Officer resource to further engage and establish the new engagement structure.

3.3 the Council's new Tenant Engagement Strategy is being created and will be presented to Members in May 2022.

4.0 Digital Implications

4.1 The tenant forum members have completed their digital training and we have a number of sessions planned at the Community Hub where tenants will be able to receive an introduction to digital skills. We are working with Inspire to see if a further course can be offered for those tenants who wish to further develop these skills. 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.

4.2 We have been able to offer tenants the opportunity to engage online or face to face for all tenant involvement and have provide a hybrid model for all Tenant engagement meetings.

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 FIN21-22/93

6.1 There are no additional financial implications resulting from this update report.

7.0 Comments from Housing Advisory Group

7.1 The group met on 28th February and were very pleased with the progress of the tenant engagement structure and the increase in tenants wanting to be involved in shaping services. It was pleasing to see the range of involvement activities available and noted that the tenant engagement team will be very busy getting the structure up and running.

7.2 The team were thanked for their hard work.

8.0 RECOMMENDATIONS that:

- a) Members are asked to note the progress in the implementation of the Housing Services tenant engagement review;**
- b) That the findings on how tenants would like to be involved is noted;**
- c) Endorse the new engagement structure and**
- d) Support the proposal to implement the Local Influence Networks**

Reason for Recommendations

To ensure the Council has wide and accessible engagement opportunities to ensure we consider the views of our tenants in all aspects of our housing services.

Background Papers

Opportunities for Involvement Document V6.

For further information please contact Julie Davidson on Ext 5542

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