

## **HOMES & COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE**

**16 MARCH 2020**

### **REVIEW OF TENANT ENGAGEMENT AND INVOLVEMENT**

#### **1.0 Purpose of Report**

1.1 This report sets out the proposals for a review of future tenant engagement and involvement in the delivery of housing services.

#### **2.0 Background Information**

2.1 Service delivery should meet our customer's needs in order to deliver an end result of highly satisfied customers. It is a regulatory requirement of housing providers to deliver effective opportunities for tenants to influence the design and delivery of housing services and their homes and to hold their landlord to account.

2.2 The main purpose of Tenancy Engagement and Involvement in a local authority setting is:

- To have understanding of our customers and know who our customers are.
- Ensure that the experience of tenants and other customers receiving housing services and living in a council home is understood and feedback acted upon.
- Deliver an end result of highly satisfied customers.

2.3 At its meeting on the 20<sup>th</sup> of January the Committee requested a further report be submitted setting out the proposals for future tenant engagement and involvement and, if required, further support for the Committee in the development and delivery of housing and tenant related services.

2.4 In order to support this it is proposed that the Housing, Health and Wellbeing Directorate undertake a full review of tenant engagement and involvement.

2.5 The review will enable us to ascertain what we require in order to ensure customers (future, present and past) views can be used to scrutinise and shape services. That we can evidence need in order to ensure decision making at all levels of the housing service has the customer voice front and centre; enabling customers to hold the council to account in relation to the delivery of housing services.

#### **3.0 Project Objectives**

3.1 A suite of project objectives have been developed and consulted on with the Housing Advisory Group.

- a. Determine what the purpose is and nature of the council's commitment to tenant involvement and engagement.
- b. Determine how tenant involvement and engagement contributes to the delivery of the Community Plan.

- c. Determine the sources of information and evidence that can be used to understand the diverse needs, expectations and opinions of all tenants and other customers, including how tenants and other customers want to be engaged.
  - d. Determine how tenant involvement and engagement aligns with council-wide service, community and place-based involvement and engagement activities.
- 3.2 In order to ensure there is sufficient opportunity for research, development, consultation and implementation; it is expected that the review will take place over several months. It is proposed that the project is undertaken in three phases:
- a. Project phase 1- Purpose and Role: agree the purpose of tenant involvement and engagement, how it will be used to improve homes and services, inform the work of the Committee and enable tenants to hold the council to account.
  - b. Project phase 2 - Model of Tenant Involvement and Engagement: agree the ways in which tenants and other customers will be engaged, how their views will be obtained and considered, and regulatory requirements will be met (this includes structures, roles, digital engagement, surveys etc).
  - c. Project phase 3 - Implementation: agree how tenant involvement and engagement opportunities will be implemented and recruited to, what training and support will be available for tenants and councillors, what resources are required (eg budget, staffing) and how feedback will be given to tenants and other customers.
- 3.3 The Committee is invited to note that additional resources may be required to support the review. Any resource would be allocated from savings identified from bringing the housing service in-house.

#### **4.0 Equalities Implications**

- 4.1 There are no direct equalities implications arising from this report.

#### **5.0 Financial Implications - FIN19-20/8775**

- 5.1 As stated in paragraph 3.3, any resource requirements would be allocated from savings identified from bringing the housing service in-house.

#### **6.0 Community Plan – Alignment to Objectives**

- 6.1 The proposed review aligns with the objective to build more homes and deliver an excellent housing management service, specifically:
- a. Ensuring that the experience of tenants and other customers receiving housing services and living in a council home is understood and feedback acted upon;

- b. Providing effective opportunities for tenants to influence the design and delivery of housing services and their homes and to hold the council to account.

## **7.0 Comments of Director**

- 7.1 This is the first review of tenant involvement and engagement in many years, and is very timely, given the transfer of housing services back into the council.
- 7.2 It presents a real opportunity to ensure all tenants and other customers have a voice which informs important decisions about the ways in which services are delivered and the investment in their homes and neighbourhoods.
- 7.3 The review will respect the significant impact of some tenants over many years who engage through existing involvement mechanisms. It will also consider how we can engage a wider cross-section of tenants and other customers than at present. The new involvement and engagement framework should generate stronger evidence to inform the Committee's decision making.
- 7.4 It's important that the review is undertaken on a phased basis as this will help to ensure that the resulting opportunities attract a wide range of tenants and other customers.

## **8.0 RECOMMENDATION(S)**

**That the Committee approve the objectives of the review detailed at paragraph 3.1.**

**That the Committee notes that additional resources allocated from the efficiency savings may be required during this review.**

## **Reason for Recommendation(s)**

The proposed review supports the commitment of the District Council to tenant engagement and involvement and strengthens compliance with the Regulator of Social Housing - Tenant Engagement and Empowerment Standard

## **Background Papers**

None

For further information please contact Dave Newmarch on 07470423961, or Julian Paine on 07968 421362

Julian Paine  
Interim Director – Housing, Health & Wellbeing

