

WARDS AFFECTED: ALL

ITEM NO:

**WEST AREA COMMITTEE
12 NOVEMBER 2008**

REPORT OF ACTING DIRECTOR OF LOCAL COMMUNITIES

AREA COMMITTEE REPRESENTATION ON THE NOTTINGHAM CITY HOMES AREA PANELS

1 SUMMARY

Following a decision of Executive Board on 20 May 2008, this report invites each Area Committee to nominate one of its elected members as its representative on the relevant Nottingham City Homes (NCH) Area Panel.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Area Committee nominate one elected member to be its representative on the West Area Panel.

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Executive Board agreed on 20 May 2008 to appoint elected members to NCH Area Housing Panels and to delegate authority for making the appointments to Area Committees. The report to Executive Board underlined that these appointments should ideally be elected members although non-Councillors could be appointed if necessary.
- 3.2 NCH has nine well established Area Panels. They regularly meet with tenants and residents as a way of feeding information up to the NCH Board and receiving feedback in return. They are co-terminus with the nine Area Committees of Nottingham City Council (NCC).
- 3.3 Area Panels are a formally recognised and constituted consultative body, made up of 12/15 tenants and leaseholders, set up by each Area Housing Manager to cover a specific Housing Management Area. The Area Panels are 'profiled' to match the overall make-up of the community in that specific area, regarding proportions of tenants and leaseholders, different age groups, tenants with disabilities, Black Minority Ethnic (BME) tenants and leaseholders, etc. Recognised Tenants' and Residents' Associations and local contacts are included within the membership of the Area Panels. Area Panels feed into the NCC Area Committees via formal reporting arrangements and input from elected members, senior NCH officers and Panel members.
- 3.4 The role of the Area Panel, from the terms of reference, is:
 - to help NCH meet the aims and objectives set out in the Compact;

- to involve customers in the provision of housing and related services and to assist with improving housing and related services;
- to receive, consider, and comment upon service and performance reports including reports about estate and neighbourhood inspections and reports from Tenant Inspectors;
- to liaise with Tenant Inspectors over any inspections to be carried out in the area, to request specific inspections and to receive reports from Tenant Inspectors and review their findings;
- to monitor and review performance and service delivery and value for money, including performance of contractors and other relevant service providers to Council tenants and leaseholders, and to compare findings with other Area Panels;
- to report findings and make recommendations for service and performance improvement to the Area Housing Manager, the Nottingham Tenants' and Leaseholders' Congress, the Board of NCH and NCC as necessary;
- to make recommendations to NCH and NCC for service and, as necessary, performance improvement and development of policy and strategy;
- to report to the Area Housing Manager, the Nottingham Tenants' and Leaseholders' Congress and the NCH Board;
- to assist Area Housing Managers in developing standards and targets to improve performance and service delivery;
- to take part in consultation about, and influence the development of, housing policies and strategies;
- to advise the relevant manager on local priorities for the provision of housing services and the allocation of resources;
- to identify wider community issues and propose priorities for action to NCH, NCC and any other appropriate body or agency;
- to be accountable to the Board of NCH for the management of any area-based budgets delegated to the Panel by the Board. This will include being responsible for deciding spending priorities within any criteria set by the Board and managing and monitoring any such spending;
- to be responsible for deciding spending priorities for neighbourhood and environmental improvements;
- to liaise, from time to time, with NCC Officers and elected members, and other statutory or voluntary organisations in order to develop and improve services to Council tenants and leaseholders;

- to provide two-way communication with the Area Committees established by NCC by receiving and commenting upon reports and providing reports to those Area Committees.

3.5 The requirements of the Area Panels are:

- Panels shall be made up solely of Council tenants and leaseholders profiled to match the overall make-up of the specific Housing Management Area in relation to proportions of tenants and leaseholders, younger and older tenants, tenants from BME communities and disabled tenants;

(N.B. NCH will be requested to amend the Terms of Reference of the Area Panels, to enable representation from elected members who are not Council tenants or leaseholders)

- Area Housing Managers are responsible for ensuring that details of each and any inspection in the area are summarised and given to the Area Panels;
- all Council tenants and leaseholders are able to put themselves forward for consideration for membership of the Area Panels. Individual tenants and leaseholders and recognised local block, neighbourhood or street representatives and Council tenants and leaseholders formally elected or nominated by registered Tenants and Residents Associations shall fill a specified number of places on the Panel, as agreed between the Tenants and Leaseholders' Congress and the Area Housing Manager;
- meetings to fit into performance monitoring cycles with agendas jointly agreed between staff and tenants;
- meetings to be held in venues that are accessible to tenants and at times to meet tenants' needs;
- to promote equality of opportunity and seek to reach and involve traditionally excluded or under-involved tenants;
- development and administrative support to be provided for each Panel by a specific officer of NCH;
- NCH and NCC to provide feedback to each meeting of the Panel detailing responses to matters raised by the Panel and action taken;
- to follow a formal 'Code of Conduct' agreed between NCH and the Tenants' and Leaseholders' Congress.

3.6 Each Area Panel meets every two months, routinely for 2 hours each time, and meetings can vary between afternoon and early evening. Representatives taking on the role would need to be able to commit their time on a regular basis.

4 **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

None.

5 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

None.

6 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

The West Area Committee is keen on ensuring the representation of minority groups onto decision making bodies such as Area Panels. The Neighbourhood Management Team will work with Nottingham City Homes to achieve a diverse membership on the Area Panel.

7 RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES

None.

8 STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

As part of the Council's commitment to Neighbourhood Management, formal links, reporting mechanisms and partnership working will be strengthened by this approach, whilst operational links will be through the 60 Neighbourhood Actions Teams (NATs) across the City.

9 CRIME AND DISORDER ACT IMPLICATIONS

None.

10 VALUE FOR MONEY

There are no value for money implications arising from this report.

11 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS OTHER THAN PUBLISHED WORKS OR THOSE DISCLOSING CONFIDENTIAL OR EXEMPT INFORMATION

None.

12 PUBLISHED DOCUMENTS REFERRED TO IN COMPILING REPORT

Report to Executive Board – 20 May 2008 - Appointments to Outside Bodies – Annual Review and minutes of that meeting.

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