

Housing and City Development Scrutiny Committee

19 February 2024

Council Tenant Engagement

Report of the Statutory Scrutiny Officer

1 Purpose

- 1.1 To review how the Council's new governance arrangements for social housing ensure effective tenant engagement in decision-making.

2 Action required

- 2.1 The Committee is asked:

- 1) to review the approach being developed to ensure that Council tenants and leaseholders are able to engage meaningfully with their landlord, including the consideration being given to how an appropriate tenant representative could be co-opted onto the Committee, and return any comments and feedback; and
- 2) to consider whether any further scrutiny of the issue is required (and, if so, to identify the focus and timescales).

3 Background information

- 3.1 This issue falls within the remit of the Portfolio Holder for Housing.
- 3.2 The new Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 has three core objectives:
- to facilitate a new, proactive consumer regulation regime;
 - to refine the existing economic regulatory regime; and
 - to strengthen the Regulator of Social Housing's (RSH's) powers to enforce the consumer and economic regimes.
- 3.3 The 2023 Act has strengthened the role and rights of tenants in regard to their influence over the services provided by their landlord. The RSH also has new powers that will enable it to inspect all landlords proactively on a four-yearly programme. The RSH will observe both how landlords makes decisions and how they take account of the tenant perspective as part of the process. The RSH will also consider how landlord services provided by Local Authorities are monitored and how assurance is carried out in relation to core delivery and compliance.
- 3.4 Since Nottingham City Homes (NCH) was brought back in-house in April 2023, the Council has had direct responsibility for housing management and maintenance services, including the tenant and leaseholder involvement function. With the Council now acting as a corporate landlord, it is essential to

establish how tenants will retain the level of empowerment that they had within NCH, and also how they will be able to have a meaningful influence on Council decision-making, within the Constitution.

- 3.5 As a result, the creation of a new Housing Assurance Board (HAB) has been proposed. It is planned for the HAB to recruit a representative cohort of ten tenants and two leaseholders. A 'fit for the future' role description is being developed to recruit residents from across the city who reflect the wider community and the diverse nature of tenants, and have the necessary skills required to participate effectively. The Council will resource training needs and, once established, the HAB will be fully supported in order to fulfil its roles and objectives.
- 3.6 In addition, to seek to meet the full extent of the empowerment requirements set out in the 2023 Act, consideration is being given to how a tenant could be co-opted onto the Committee for its consideration of housing-related matters, as this would have the benefit of providing an independent tenant's viewpoint as part of the formal Scrutiny process.
- 3.7 A report has been produced, and is attached, to outline the approach being developed to ensure that tenants and leaseholders can have meaningful engagement with the Council as landlord.

4 List of attached information

- 4.1 Report: Council Tenant Engagement

5 Background papers, other than published works or those disclosing exempt or confidential information

- 5.1 None

6 Published documents referred to in compiling this report

- 6.1 None

7 Wards affected

- 7.1 All

8 Contact information

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