

Report Reference Number: E/19/06

To: Executive
Date: 1st August 2019
Status: Non Key Decision
Ward(s) Affected: ALL
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Lead Executive Member: Cllr Chris Pearson, Lead Executive Member for Housing, Health and Culture
Lead Officer: June Rothwell, Head of Operational Services

Title: Tenant Participation Strategy 2019-2022

Summary:

All social housing tenants and leaseholders have a right to be consulted and to be involved in tenant participation activities. The Council's previous Tenant Participation Strategy was written in 2010 and requires update, taking into account more recent Government direction, Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS) recommendations and modern methods of engagement.

Recommendations:

That the Executive approves the draft Tenant Participation Strategy and Action Plan 2019-2022.

Reasons for recommendation:

Whilst tenant participation is not new to the Council, we want to build on current opportunities and increase our expertise and reputation in this field. Approving the draft plan provides the Council with a real opportunity to further develop a genuine partnership with both our tenants and leaseholders, working with them to shape the future of our housing service.

1 Introduction and background

- 1.1** The Council's previous Tenant Participation Strategy was published in 2010. However, the ways in which we involve and communicate with our tenants has changed, providing us with the opportunity to improve our approach to tenant engagement in new and refreshed Strategy and plan. Since April 2017, the Council has dedicated additional staffing resource to tenant engagement, providing a 0.5FTE Tenant Participation Officer role. This provides us with the resource to further cement and improve our relationships with tenants - providing new, diverse and modern approaches to tenant engagement.

- 1.2** Successful tenant participation should deliver benefits for all those involved - that being the landlord, staff, and tenants. Benefits often include fewer complaints, higher tenant satisfaction and shared accountability when making decisions. Ultimately, the aim of tenant involvement is to understand the needs, aspirations and experiences of Council tenants and to improve our services as a result of this.
- 1.3** The Council has been a member of TPAS since 2015 and we aim to achieve our objectives by following the TPAS Community Engagement Standards:
- Engagement Strategy: Ensure our tenant engagement links directly to business plan objectives.
 - Resources for Engagement: Engagement must be adequately resourced to ensure it is effective in delivering planned outcomes.
 - Information and Insight: We should provide access to information at the right level, at the right time, and in the right way.
 - Influence and Scrutiny: Ensure tenants, leaseholders and communities can influence appropriately.
 - Community Engagement: We should engage with communities and local stakeholders to develop projects and plans to meet jointly identified needs.
 - Valuing Engagement: Ensure our tenant engagement outcomes will benefit stakeholder organisations, tenants, leaseholders and communities.

2 The Report

- 2.1** This new strategy has been developed with consideration to a wide range of local and national factors. Notably, the social housing sector awaits potentially radical reforms with the introduction of the Government's Green Paper 'A New Deal for Social Housing' published in August 2018. Here, tenant engagement has a central focus, pushing for a rebalance of power between tenant and landlord in the wake of Grenfell.
- 2.2** With this in mind, our new Tenant Participation Strategy 2019-2022 (Appendix A) will demonstrate how the Council will work in partnership with its tenants and leaseholders to shape and deliver a high quality housing service within the district. It will build on the good initiatives already in place, but also recognise the need to modernise and improve our approach to tenant involvement. It will also set out the standards we work towards in order to ensure that tenants remain involved and consulted at whatever level they choose to be. This includes providing tenants with a 'Menu of Engagement' which outlines the various engagement opportunities available to tenants/leaseholders and the level of commitment each requires.
- 2.3** The Strategy will run for three years with review opportunities in each year to further develop our approach to engagement. We acknowledge that, as the environment we do business in evolves and changes, as too does the customer base we serve; and we will make every effort to engage all types of tenant, including those most vulnerable and frequently under-represented.
- 2.4** Taking into account our previous good work and TPAS recommendations, the strategy puts forward four overarching aims, which are:

- 1) To set out how we will encourage tenants to become actively involved and empowered in the decision making processes of Selby District Council.
- 2) To develop an innovative and modern approach to tenant participation at Selby District Council to achieve diversity in the participation opportunities we offer and the voices we hear.
- 3) To demonstrate that tenants are part of our continuous improvement process and ensure all Council staff actively participates with the engagement agenda.
- 4) To promote an honest and trustworthy relationship between Selby District Council and our tenants and leaseholders; focusing on a free exchange of information and ideas.

2.5 This strategy has been developed in partnership with our tenants. A consultation event took place with our Tenant Scrutiny Panel in order to approve these aims and generate supplementary objectives. These objectives were then used to form the basis of the Strategy's Action Plan, which will become our Tenant Engagement Officer's programme of work for the lifespan of the Strategy.

2.6 The Strategy also recognises that there are a number of barriers experienced by tenants and leaseholders which can limit their ability to engage with us. However, we must try and overcome these barriers if we are to ensure the aims and objectives of the Strategy are met. Consequently, the Council is clear in what resources it can offer, and as well as dedicated staffing, commit to offering practical solutions to make tenant participation a viable option for as many tenants and leaseholders as possible.

3 Alternative Options Considered

None

4 Implications

4.1 Legal Implications

The Regulatory Framework for Social Housing in England (April 2012), states that registered providers must ensure that tenants are given a wide range of opportunities to influence and be involved in the formulation of their landlord's housing related policies and strategic priorities. This includes housing service delivery, service standards, scrutiny, management of homes and repairs.

4.2 Financial Implications

The Housing Revenue Account provides a budget of £26,950 per year for Tenant Participation. This is deemed adequate at present in fulfilling the Strategy's aims and objectives.

Engaging with tenants will however allow us to identify their aspirations in regards to their properties. Although the costs of engagement can be managed within budget, there could be wider financial implications in regards to managing tenant's priorities on stock condition; identified via increased engagement and potentially impacting on capital investment within our housing

stock. This investment programme will be addressed in the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan.

4.3 Policy and Risk Implications

N/A

4.4 Corporate Plan Implications

The Strategy supports Priority 3 of the Corporate Plan – making Selby District a great place to make a difference. This priority focuses on supporting communities to have an active and influential role in working with us to deliver the right services.

4.5 Resource Implications

There are no additional implications.

4.6 Other Implications

N/A

4.7 Equalities Impact Assessment

An Equality, Diversity and Community Impact Screening was completed on 18/06/2019.

5 Conclusion

All social landlords have a responsibility to involve local people in the issues that affect them. Approving the draft plan provides a starting point for the next three years, building on the Council's good work and furthering developing and delivering meaningful engagement; where tenants and leaseholders will have a range of participation opportunities which will ultimately lead to service improvement.

6 Background Documents

Selby District Council's Tenant Participation Strategy 2010

7 Appendices

Appendix A) Tenant Participation Strategy 2019-2022 and,
Tenant Participation Strategy: Action Plan

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