



NORTHAMPTON
BOROUGH COUNCIL

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OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

9th September 2013

BRIEFING NOTE: Progress report on the Implementation of New Tenant Engagement Strategy

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Following cabinet approval of the Tenant Engagement Strategy, O&S requested that a report be presented at the September meeting outlining progress made to date with its implementation.

2 UPDATE

- 2.1 Implementation of the Tenant Engagement Strategy has begun with a number of activities and actions linking engagement and involvement of tenants and leaseholders with the introduction of a more structured performance management framework for the service as a whole.
- 2.2 The menu of opportunities for tenants and leaseholders to get involved in the service ranges from low level engagement such as participation in a reading group that looks at the written media the service intends to produce – tenants magazines, leaflets etc – right up to membership of the Scrutiny Panel and the active scrutiny of the council's Landlord Service.
- 2.3 The overall concept and objectives of the Strategy were put to a formal Tenant Conference in May. This conference outlined the roles that tenants and leaseholders can play in the monitoring and scrutiny of the housing service and introduced the framework for involvement that will put tenants at the heart of the housing management service.
- 2.4 The Tenant Conference was followed by a formal launch of the Tenant Engagement Strategy and the role of tenant scrutiny and a number of workshops and meetings on the introduction and development of Service Improvement Panels. Service Improvement Panels (SIPs) include tenant and leaseholders and officers and look at specific areas of the service. The SIPs then feed up into the overall performance management and scrutiny of the service.
- 2.5 The launch of the SIPs took place in June and tenants and leaseholders at the event requested that we set up 5 SIPs looking at specific service areas and in the first instance concentrate on the service standards customers have a right to expect. The five service areas are i) Neighbourhoods, ii) Repairs and Maintenance, iii) Rents and Welfare Reform, iv) Voids and v) Service Standards. The Service Standards SIP has changed its focus to

look at customer standards and will take an overview of the service standards proposed by the other four SIIPs. The original guidance note agreed with tenants and leaseholders for the formation and operation of the SIPs is at Attachment 1

- 2.6 In parallel with the formal development of tenant scrutiny and active participation in the management and monitoring of the service the Housing Stock Options process has led to the development of a group of tenants who are well informed, articulate and empowered to make decisions about the future of the service. It is important that we don't lose this impetus and this group of individuals and it is intended to encourage the Tenant Panel members to continue to work with the council as an integral part of the overall engagement and scrutiny process once their specific deliberations on the Stock Options process is complete. It is intended to widen tenant representation on the Tenant Panel both geographically and gender, age and ethnicity. It is anticipated that the Tenant Panel will become the reporting body for the SIPs. The engagement model is at Attachment 2.
- 2.7 The Service Improvement Panels are integral to the success of the Engagement Strategy providing the link between the wider tenant body and the more detailed monitoring and scrutiny of the service. The SIPs will need time to develop and membership will fluctuate as the tenants and leaseholders take on more tasks in the monitoring of the service. The service will continue to support the SIPs.
- 2.8 The implementation of the Tenant Engagement Strategy has generally gone well. We have a raft of arrangements and opportunities for people to get engaged with and involved in the service at a range of levels to suit their commitment and their abilities. We continue to provide formal training and formal and informal support for any tenant or leaseholder to become actively engaged with the service.

3 RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 That Committee note the content of this report

4. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 4.1 None

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