

BABERGH DISTRICT COUNCIL and MID SUFFOLK DISTRICT COUNCIL

From: Assistant Director - Housing	Report Number: JHB/17/7
To: Joint Housing Board	Date of meeting: 18 September 2017

RESIDENT INVOLVEMENT REVIEW

1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 Following the recent independent review of Resident Involvement, commissioned by the Councils, and undertaken by Housing Quality Network HQN. This report is to inform the Housing Board of the outcomes of the review, and the recommendations made by HQN.
- 1.2 To inform the Joint Housing Board of the Councils decision to accept the recommendations as set out in the attached report (See Appendix One - Section Six – Moving forward).
- 1.3 To disband all current resident involvement opportunities including the Joint Housing Board, the Tenants Forum, Mystery Shoppers, Tenant Inspectors, Estate Inspectors and Scrutiny Panel, with immediate effect.
- 1.4 To set out the next steps including the development of new engagement structures that meet the aspirations of tenants, members and officers, and which provide an explicit link to the Council's strategic objectives.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 That the disbandment of all existing engagement opportunities with immediate effect be recommended to Cabinet.
- 2.2 That the disbandment of the Joint Housing Board be recommended to Council.
- 2.3 That a consultation exercise on developing an alternative model of engagement, will commence immediately, be agreed.
- 2.4 That a phased consultation with tenants and leaseholders using a variety of methods to gain understanding of what information they want, which engagement methods they would prefer, and what would motivate them to or deter them from getting involved be agreed.
- 2.5 That a period of consultation (no more than two months) with councillors and officers to define the Council's objectives and preferred outcomes for resident involvement be undertaken.

3 Financial Implications

- 3.1 The cost of developing a new engagement model including any associated costs e.g. print, post, consultation events, officer time and professional services will be funded from the savings as a direct result of disbanding the existing engagement opportunities.

4 Legal Implications

- 4.1 Babergh & Mid Suffolk Councils are not fully compliant with the current Tenant Involvement and Empowerment standard as set out in the HQN report. The proposed development of a revised engagement structure will ensure compliance is met.

5. Risk Management

- 5.1 Moving forward with the report:

Risk	Description	Mitigation
Reputational risks	Tenants know that the existing structures aren't working and have seen the review process as an opportunity to help improve and shape the future of Involvement. Not moving forward with the recommendations would make residents feel that the Councils have no confidence in taking forward the recommendations.	Holding a workshop with tenants to fully explain the report, recommendations and for them to be involved in the consultation going forward will help to maintain relationships.
Resources within Resident Involvement	With the existing Involvement Officer being on maternity leave, additional resource will need to be sourced for this work to move forward.	Additional resource will be sourced to work solely on this project. This can be funded through existing monies.

- 5.2 Not moving forward with the report:

Risk	Description	Mitigation
Reputational risks	Tenants know that the existing structures aren't working and have seen the review process as an opportunity to help improve and shape the future of Involvement.	The Councils have committed to moving forward with the review and recommendations. It is vital that the existing tenants are involved in moving the recommendations forward.

Risk	Description	Mitigation
	By not moving forward with the recommendations, it could make residents feel that the Councils have no commitment to improving the resident involvement opportunities to enable tenants and leaseholders to successfully participate in meaningful involvement work.	
Not compliant with regulation	We are not compliant with HCA (Homes and Communities Agency) framework and open to challenge	Although the councils could put in the necessary mechanisms to become compliant, it would simply be a 'sticking plaster'. Moving forward with the recommendations in the report would mean we are compliant in the future and will have a structure that works for the two councils and its residents.
Money spent on a report that isn't used	The Councils commissioned HQN to come in and carry out the independent review at a cost of £6k.	The councils have committed to taking the report forward, therefore the money spent on the report should be invaluable.
Servicing a structure that isn't fit for purpose	All those involved in the review have recognised that what we have at this current time, isn't working.	By progressing forward with the recommendations, the Councils have shown their commitment to improving the opportunities for residents to be involved in our Housing Service.

6 Consultations

- 6.1 The review of Resident involvement took place with the views, and opinions of all those involved being taken into consideration before the production of a final report written and produced by Sue Farrant, HQN.
- 6.2 This report clearly sets out how consultation will take place as part of the next steps.

6.3 Meetings have taken place with the Tenants Forum to explain the Councils proposals in relation to suspending the Forum.

7 Equality Analysis

7.1 The planned consultation will ensure the development of any engagement opportunities, are available to anyone with a protected characteristic.

8 Shared Service / Partnership Implications

None

9 Links to Joint Strategic Plan

9.1 This report is most closely linked to:

- Community led solutions to deliver services and manage assets
- Community volunteers are skilled and able
- Manage our housing assets effectively
- Alternative service delivery models
- Strengthened and clear governance to enable delivery
- Digital by design

10 Key Information

10.1 Resident Involvement Review – next steps

10.2 Housing Quality Network (HQN) has issued their report and findings on the Resident Involvement Review for Babergh and Mid Suffolk.

10.3 **Stage 1** - The following is a proposal that indicates how the report will be taken forward and work started on the recommendations included within that report.

- That the Councils want to progress forward with the recommendations set out within the HQN report and have confidence in what is being proposed
- That all tenant involvement opportunities will disband with immediate effect but that the tenants will have an important role to play in supporting the work going forward
- That the Councils will commit to working with tenants and stakeholders to develop a model that will be fit for purpose and benefits both the organisations and the tenants.

10.4 **Stage 2** – The Councils will work with the current involved tenants to develop a consultative group to assist in researching good practice, acting as a sounding board, to support the Council in attending any consultation events and meeting tenants, to agree any supporting documents that maybe distributed more widely amongst residents.

10.5 Stage 3 - Wider consultation and involvement of existing tenants as we move forward

10.6 Following the development of a consultative group we will progress forward with the wider tenant consultation. Principles of consultation will be:

- Use a variety of methods to engage our tenants and leaseholders such as social media, telephone, letter, face-to-face, online surveys, and possible roadshows out in the community/on large estates
- Our consultation will be informative – we will test our questions to ensure that the results will tell us what we need to move forward
- Our consultation will last for a proportionate amount of time – taking into account the numbers we need to engage
- We will use our existing involved tenants to help engage other tenants in the consultation process

11 Appendices

Title	Location
Appendix 1 - Review of Resident Involvement Structures Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils HQN	Attached

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