

TENANT REVIEW PANEL - PROPOSAL

Report of the Director of Housing and Customer Service

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 It is a requirement for social landlords to have tenants review the services they provide. In 2010 Derby Homes recruited a panel of six tenants to carry out this role. This panel has since depleted in numbers and is no longer functional. This report details a proposal for a new way forward for review at Derby Homes.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 That the City Board approves the proposal that the Review Panel is recruited from tenants who are already engaged and active with Derby Homes with each existing tenant body offered an opportunity to co-opt a member onto the Review Panel.

3. MATTER FOR CONSIDERATION

- 3.1 Tenant panels look set to form a part of the new Involvement & Regulatory Standard in that it is expected that landlords will be required to have opportunities for tenants to scrutinise landlord performance, to be involved in the complaints procedure and to hold landlords to account for service delivery.
- 3.2 The Housing Minister has asked the National Tenant Organisations (NTOs) to lead on the development of a framework for local tenant panels. This project will include researching what is currently going on and exploring a limited number of 'front runner' projects of different landlords and their tenants.
- 3.3 There is no prescriptive method or guidance available for landlords to adopt when forming a panel. Both Housemark and CIH have suggested that best practice would be to form the panel from tenants who are independent and do not have involvement in other areas of the business. Derby Homes created its initial Tenants Review Panel on this basis, with the aim of monitoring the Local Offers, and producing reports to be considered by Derby Homes to improve the service provided to tenants. Their first report on the repairs service was reported to the City Board at its last meeting and the Repairs Manager's response is on today's agenda.
- 3.4 However this is a huge commitment for any tenant to deliver the expectations of thorough scrutiny and review. Derby Homes has already invested in this approach and initially recruited a panel of six tenants who were not on the main or the City Board. However the numbers have quickly diminished from six to two members.

- 3.5 The localism agenda encourages all to adopt methods which work in the local area. Derby already has a large number of tenants who are involved in a range of structures for review as outlined in points 3.6-3.8 of this report.
- 3.6 Tenants and leaseholders already sit on the main Board and the City Board and have gained a lot of knowledge of Derby Homes' work as a result. These tenants and leaseholders are able to separate their role as Board Members and as individual tenants and leaseholders, and so will be invited to join the Review Panel in this capacity.
- 3.7 The Derby Association of Community Partners (DACP) already reviews elements of our services as 'mystery shoppers' and report directly to the City Board, such as the voids procedure. This involves the tenants who carry out the review effectively having to wear a 'different hat' when considering the findings at the City Board. Members of the DACP management committee and regular attenders at the open meetings of the DACP will be invited to join the Review Panel.
- 3.8 Osmaston Community Association of Residents (OSCAR) has also expressed an interest in being mystery shoppers to check the standards of the work being carried out by contractors operating in the Osmaston area of the City. Tenants from this and other area based groups will be invited to join the Review Panel.
- 3.9 There are several other forms of tenant involvement, scrutiny and review that happen within Derby Homes and are shown on Appendix 1 of this report. Again tenants from these groups will be invited to join the Review Panel.
- 3.10 The proposal is that, we invite tenants and leaseholders on each Housing Focus Group, specialist group, City Board and Leaseholders to co-opt a member onto the Tenant Review Panel which will be supported by the Resident Involvement and Performance Teams.
- 3.11 The Panel will be required to meet formally to agree a work programme of reviews, set up a specific group to carry out a particular review, who will meet with staff from relevant teams and prepare a report on their findings and make recommendations agreed by the Panel and submitted to the City and main Board. Members of the Review Panel will also be responsible for forming the Tenant Complaint Panel to review particular complaints when required. The Review Panel will be responsible for a budget, details of this to be formalised with the group.

4. CONSULTATION IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 We have consulted with the DACP Management Committee and the two remaining members of the Tenant Review Panel. They have agreed that this is the best way forward for review at Derby Homes and fully support the proposal.

5. RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 If we do not introduce an effective review process, we could be perceived as not being open and transparent to our tenants and attract interest from future regulatory bodies.

The areas listed below have no implications directly arising from this report:

Financial and Business Plan
Legal and Confidentiality
Council
Personnel
Environmental
Equalities Impact Assessment
Health & Safety
Policy Review

If Board members or others would like to discuss this report ahead of the meeting please contact the author, or Phil Davies, Chief Executive, phil.davies@derbyhomes.org – Phone: 01332 888528

Author: Julie Eyre / Performance Manager / 01332 888393 / julie.eyre@derbyhomes.org

Background Information: None

Supporting Information: None

