

Report for Resolution

Report to Executive
28 July 2010
Report of Director of Regeneration & Development
Subject Future Membership of the Housing Improvement Board

8

Purpose

To seek Executive approval to change the membership of the Housing Improvement Board

Recommendations

That the Executive:

1. Agree that the two councillor representatives on the Housing Improvement Board be a member of the Executive and a member from one of the other political groups, with substitutes being nominated to cover meetings when the principal members are unavailable.
2. Agree that the two tenant representatives on the Housing Improvement Board be the Chair of the Citywide Board and a tenant recruited from the Plus4 consultation panels.

Financial Consequences

There are no financial consequences arising from this report.

Risk Assessment

There are no risks associated with the proposals.

Strategic Priority and Outcome/Service Priorities

The report helps to meet the strategic One Council priority that includes the requirement for the continuous improvement of our service in a cost conscious manner that puts customers at the heart of everything we do and the service plan priority achieving a two star housing service by March 2011.

Executive Member: Councillor Arthur - Housing and Adult Services

Ward: All Wards

Contact Officers

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Background Documents

There are no background documents

Background

1. The Board was established in March 2009 to provide strategic direction of the housing improvement project and to ensure effective monitoring of the outcomes of the project.
2. The board is chaired by an independent person and is made up of key project stakeholders including nominated tenant representatives and the council's portfolio holders for adult services and housing and sustainable city development, representatives of Improvement East, Audit Commission, GO-EAST, IDEA and Cambridge City Council. The work of the board is supported by senior officers from a range of disciplines. It was agreed that in the first year the tenant representatives on the board would be the Chair and Vice Chair of the City Wide Board.
3. The Board was established by the Executive and any changes to terms of reference, appointments etc require the approval of the executive. The outcomes of the deliberations of HIB have, where appropriate, been reported to the Executive for action and have been assessed by the Scrutiny Committee as part of their consideration of the housing improvement plan.

Terms of reference

4. The terms of reference are as follows:
 - To provide strategic direction and challenge to the improvement programme for housing services
 - To monitor and review the Council's response to the Audit Commission Inspection for landlord services
 - To challenge the delivery of service improvements covered by the KLOEs
 - To receive and review performance information
 - To consider and review how the service engages with tenants
 - To review how information from tenants is used to improve service provision

Role of the board

5. During the first year of operation the HIB have overseen the establishment of essential building blocks for the improvement of the housing service including enhanced performance management, tenant engagement, service planning and improved management. A project management approach has been adopted and the Board has monitored the achievement of tasks against an agreed timescale. In undertaking this task the Board have provided:
 - A sounding board and expert guidance to officers.
 - Informed challenge and critical friend to the improvement journey.
 - Guidance on key priorities on this journey of improvement.

- Help in focusing on outcomes as well as process, inputs etc.
 - Help to re-establish confidence in the service with clear goals and ambitions.
 - Help for the service to be more aware of its achievements and areas for improvement.
6. With the help of the housing improvement board the housing service has successfully launched a transformation programme with a challenging but nonetheless deliverable ambition to be a 2 star housing service by 2011. To date the main priority has been meeting the requirements of the audit commission and, in doing this, establishing sound management processes and procedure together with clear arrangements for placing the needs of the tenant and leaseholder at the heart of the service and making the organization 'fit for purpose'. The recent peer review has indicated that the service is on track to achieve the equivalent to a 2 star service by 2011.

Priorities for the housing service 2010/11

7. Although a significant amount has been achieved over the past year it is clear that the service has to achieve another step change to demonstrate tangible and sustainable benefits for tenants and leaseholders. In this context the main priorities for the service will be:
- The development of tenant and leaseholder liaison and engagement work to ensure that customer views and requirements are at the heart of service delivery.
 - The adoption of a continuous improvement model of service delivery having particular regard to the outcome of the peer review and the aspiration to be a 2 star service by March 2011.
 - The successful adoption of new ways of delivering the repairs and maintenance service as part of the new housing works contracts.
 - The realignment of the housing service to meet the new approach adopted by the council for the delivery and management of services at a neighbourhood level.
 - The development of estate services that seek to sustain tenancies, reward tenants who invest in their properties and provides a quick and appropriate response to ASB including poor maintenance of gardens.
 - Ensuring the 'regulatory' requirements of the TSA (or it's successor) is embedded within the service.
 - Developing a common service delivery approach with the main RSLs operating in the greater Norwich area.
 - Achieving or have plans in place to achieve top quartile performance across all housing indicators.
 - Undertake VFM and/or LEAN service reviews of the CBL service, and sheltered housing/supporting people function.

Membership of the board

8. In the context of the key priorities for 2010/11 it is clear that the main role of the board will still be to provide challenge and advice but this will be across a wider range of activities. For this reason there is no requirement to propose any

changes to the terms of reference to the board. The project management approach will continue and the requirement for the board to monitor outcomes will remain.

9. On this basis there is also no requirement to change the membership of the board, although it would be appropriate to consider widening the scope of tenant representation. Therefore it is proposed that in addition to the Chair of the City Wide Board, a tenant representative be recruited from the extensive network of tenant consultative groups that have been established as part of the Housing Improvement Programme. Furthermore there are two Executive Members appointed to the HIB and it is proposed that this be changed to one Member of the Executive and one other Member from a different political group. In making these changes the size of the Improvement Board will stay the same but will enable new participants to contribute to the Housing Improvement Programme.