



Subject: Tenant/Leaseholder Engagement update

Report to: Housing and Neighbourhoods Committee 26th January 2023

Report by: Justin Gibbs (Tenancy Services Manager); Russell Heath (Resident Engagement Officer)

SUBJECT MATTER/RECOMMENDATIONS

This paper provides an update on tenant/leaseholder engagement and progress towards delivering the Tenant/Leaseholder Engagement Strategy.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That Committee:

1. Note the report.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This report provides an update on the tenant/leaseholder engagement strategy to support the work we deliver managing homes and communal areas for tenants and leaseholders.

2.0 Tenant/Leaseholder Engagement Update

- 2.1 The Tenant/Leaseholder Engagement Strategy and associated action plan was adopted by Housing and Neighbourhood Committee in November 2021. Good progress is being made on delivering targeted areas across the four objectives set with all due to be completed by 31st March 2023.

3.0 Objective 1 – Increasing the Number of Conversations

- 3.1 Work is continuing with the Tenancy Services Team across service areas to increase the number of tenants/leaseholders who are engaged where they live. The main promotion routes are through visits to homes/communal areas and from insight survey feedback. A total of 36 new tenants/leaseholders have volunteered to be involved in the first two

quarters (Apr-Sept) of 2022. Overall we have 326 Area Voices engaged with the Council.

- 3.2 This recruitment has been supported through tenant/leaseholder engagement events including one held in Bradwell earlier this year. The event explained the opportunities on offer when becoming an Area Voice and included support on how to use the Love Clean Streets (LCS) App to report service issues. The LCS App provides the quickest route to achieve service issue resolution.
- 3.3 We also participated in Anti-Social Behaviour week working with partners and meeting tenants/leaseholders across the borough to listen to their concerns; develop resolutions and invite them to work with us in future to support local communities.
- 3.4 Estate Newsletters have been introduced to provide feedback on key issues and local improvements that have been raised by tenants/leaseholders. These have been well received and are supporting improved communication with officers at an earlier stage to achieve issue resolution before there could be a significant impact on local communities.

4.0 Objective 2 – Expanding Opportunities

- 4.1 Opportunities continue to be promoted and tenants/leaseholders are invited to participate in different ways. This includes small community consultations through a ‘Let’s Talk’ approach where we discuss local issues and walkaround communal spaces to seek views/develop improvements for local communities. We have undertaken 28 of these approaches in the first two quarters of this year compared to 17 for the whole year in 2021/22.
- 4.2 Examples of ‘Let’s Talk’ engagement included:
 - Grenville Place & Beatty Close – Addressing community issues and ASB
 - Fran Stone Court – Intergeneration engagement with tenants and the local school
 - The Lea – Parking concerns
 - Blackfriars – Surgeries with police
 - Bells Marsh Road – Parking and enviro crime
 - Beccles Road – Communal spaces
- 4.3 Recent consultations have also included reviewing the Estate Services Toolkit and the information provided to reduce enviro crime, supporting improvements to communal areas.

5.0 Objective 3 – Develop and Use Insight

- 5.1 Participation with insight surveys is increasing with 460 completed in the first two quarters of 2022/23 compared to 133 in the same period last year. This increased activity not only supports resolution of new service issues but provides increased opportunities to capture/action service improvement suggestions. All survey data received is regularly reviewed with our Operational Management Team to embed

improvements identified into service delivery . Full details of the survey outcomes and improvements made are reported separately to Committee.

- 5.2 The number of survey areas undertaken are being expanded shortly to include the Income and Asset Teams work areas later in the year.
- 5.3 The Housing Service is currently undertaking a STAR survey of to understand current perception of service delivery and benchmark against other providers. The outcome results are due to be presented to Committee towards the end of March 2023 and will subsequently be supported with an action plan developed to identify opportunities for improvement.

6.0 Objective 4 - Embedding the Engagement Approach

- 6.1 Work has been undertaken to increase the content on the website to provide improved accessible information on services to support self-serve and information how we can assist tenants/leaseholders with their service requirements.
- 6.2 Induction chats have been introduced to promote tenant/leaseholder engagement for new staff members. Regular updates are provided to staff on engagement activities and opportunities to promote areas the team can work with tenants/leaseholders to deliver services.
- 6.3 Outcomes from Insight Surveys are regularly shared with colleagues and provide a well-balanced approach of appreciation for quality service delivery and areas where we could do better.

7.0 Future Activities

- 7.1 There are number of engagement activities that are due to be delivered from January 2023 and these include:
 - Service Charge Review – Consulting with tenants and leaseholders on delivering a fairer and transparent charging system for gardening and caretaking.
 - Sheltered Housing Review – Follow up consultation with tenants focusing on communication, information and linking into the Asset Review
 - Estate Walkabouts and Area Focus Groups – Increase accountability and transparency about service deliver in local areas.

8.0 Area Voice Grant

- 8.1 The team continues to work with tenants to identify small improvements we can make to areas of housing that meet the criteria of cleaner, greener and safer.
- 8.2 We have received 32 applications this year compared to 9 received for the same period last year with grants issued up to the sum of £250. 14 applications have resulted in an improvement to the neighbourhood or works being scheduled for delivery, with a further 15 pending decision outcome. Grants issued include support for adding lighting (including solar) to remove dark spaces; supporting

tenants/leaseholder led gardening; installing locks to communal gates and deterring anti-social behaviour with anti-climb paint.

9.0 Financial Implications

9.1 There are no financial implications in relation to this report.

10.0 Risk Implications

10.1 The Council remains focused on providing a good quality and accessible service to tenants and ensuring it is compliant with the regulatory requirements for social housing.

11.0 Conclusions

11.1 The report provides an overview of the insight provided by tenants/leaseholders in response to services the Housing Team provides in addition to an update of tenant/leaseholder engagement activities.

12.0 Background Papers

Council Housing Compliance and Performance report – 15 July 2021, Housing and Neighbourhoods Committee

Areas of consideration: e.g. does this report raise any of the following issues and if so how have these been considered/mitigated against?

Area for consideration	Comment
Monitoring Officer Consultation:	Via ELT
Section 151 Officer Consultation:	Via ELT
Existing Council Policies:	Tenancy Policy, Housing Allocations Scheme, Void Policy, Social Housing Tenancy Fraud Policy, Rechargeable Repairs Policy
Financial Implications (including VAT and tax):	None associated with the report.
Legal Implications (including human rights):	No legal implications associated with the report.
Risk Implications:	Set out in the report.
Equality Issues/EQIA assessment:	None
Crime & Disorder:	None
Every Child Matters:	None