



CITY OF
Lincoln
COUNCIL

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TO ALL HOUSING SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE MEMBERS

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Date: 2 August 2019

HOUSING SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE - MONDAY, 12 AUGUST 2019

Dear Councillor,

Further to the previously issued agenda for the Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee meeting of Monday, 12 August 2019, please find attached the following additional papers.

6. Resident Involvement Update (Pages 3 - 6)

If you require any further information please feel free to contact me using the information provided above.

Yours faithfully,

A. Hewson

Democratic Services Officer

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SUBJECT: RESIDENT INVOLVEMENT UPDATE

DIRECTORATE: HOUSING AND INVESTMENT

REPORT AUTHOR: CHRIS MORTON-RESIDENT INVOLVEMENT MANAGER

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To provide an update to Housing Scrutiny Sub Committee on resident involvement. The report will focus on:
- Progress on achieving resident involvement activities for 2019

2. Background

- 2.1 The City of Lincoln Council carries out resident involvement so that residents can get involved with housing. This is so residents are able to:
- Influence decisions made about their homes
 - Have a choice about the service they receive
 - Challenge us over areas of poor service.
- 2.2 It is important for the council to have effective engagement with residents for a number of reasons and these include:
- Feedback can lead to better service design and the most important issues being tackled
 - Tenants who feel empowered and have a choice about the service they receive are less likely to complain
 - To meet the regulatory framework published by Homes England.
- 2.3 To ensure there is an involvement structure in place the council has a dedicated resident involvement team.

3. Objectives and Progress

For 2019 the objectivities listed below were agreed for resident involvement at the City of Lincoln Council. Underneath each objective is a summary of the progress that has been made against delivery of these.

- ***Update Tenant Involvement Strategy to take into account Housing Green Paper and get agreement from stakeholders.***

Still waiting for publication of the new regulatory requirements following the consultation over the Housing Green Paper before the Tenant Involvement Strategy can be updated. In the meantime we are making plans and exploring opportunities to how we could meet these.

- ***Improve Lincoln Tenants Panel's (LTP) ability to provide meaningful feedback.***

In the short term Lincoln Tenants Panel (LTP) have implemented changes at their meetings. They now have longer pre-meetings to discuss items on the agenda, using this time to decide a line of questioning for officers who attend the meeting. This is to ensure the questions are relevant for the agenda item. Each LTP member is then allowed to ask a maximum of two questions to ensure discussions stick the subject and that all LTP members get a say. Longer term we are currently at options on how to restructure LTP to ensure it is effective and continues to offer meaningful feedback.

- ***Carry out tenant-led scrutiny of services.***

The Allocations and Tenancy Group have completed a small scale review of the estate inspection programme and have put forward recommendations on how these could be approved. Their next planned review will look into the complaints process. This will look at how easy customers understand the process and the quality of the customer service when making a complaint. It will also look at the current housing complaint target of 10 days to see if this should be brought in line with the corporate council target of 15 days. The tenant inspector programme has also resumed for void council properties.

- ***Get more tenants involved and publicise RI achievements.***

This year so far the team has held workshops at four schools covering subjects such as community issues and careers. Going forward we plan to explore setting up a youth board with these schools. On the 26 June we held a DIY day at the Abbey Access Centre and have recently completed filming of the first DIY video. We have held several estate based events across the city to promote resident involve and engage with younger residents. One of these was the 'Meet the Street Event' at George Boole Drive. In terms of recruiting a younger person to Lincoln Tenants' Panel we are currently exploring a number of options, for example introducing financial remuneration for LTP members and offering qualifications for LTP members that would help them gain employment. LTP have also decided to change some of their meetings to the evening and to be held outside of City Hall. There is also a proposal to launch a World of Work training programme for residents who are long term unemployed.

- ***Social media engagement. There is a need to improve our social media and ensure it can be used to effectively involve residents.***

The decision was taken to focus on getting Facebook right before moving onto other platforms. To make sure Facebook is being used effectively we have put a schedule in place to ensure posts are relevant. These are monitored and reviewed to evaluate the engagement of these posts. We have made sure photos are taken at events and meetings to improve the aesthetics of posts. Going forward we will explore using the Facebook Live function to hold virtual focus groups that will allow us to reach a larger audience.

- ***Get community investment applications in and publicise success.***

The scheme has recently supported several applications and these include:

- Funding signage for Lives first responder vehicles
- Replacing the bear statue at Birchwood nature park
- Providing funding for new equipment following the fire at Birchwood Colts Football club
- Installing benches at Tom Ward Court
- Providing fencing and supervising the installation for the garden run by Green Synergy.

There are also several projects that have been approved for funding but awaiting completion and these are:

- Providing and installing a kitchen at the Bridge Street Church Community Centre
- Painting the Samaritans offices.

The scheme will continue to be advertised and projects promoted to show how the council has supported these.

- ***Help residents have tidy estates and improve them.***

So far we have held a number of flower planting workshops to provide to promote looking after your garden. This will be followed up by a garden competition that will be judged later in the year. The Lincoln Tenants' Panel continue to monitor the grass cutting carried out by continental and will report any issues to customer services. There is also a draft proposal in place to plant trees across the city, currently we are asking residents to put forward areas where they would like to see trees planted. Other options to be explored will include helping residents to organise painting parties for fences on their street. We are also planning to carry out consultation with residents over estate improvements.

- ***Involve residents with fire safety.***

Fire safety information is published in Home! magazine and on Facebook. We are currently producing a pictorial guide on fire safety for residents and this will be aimed at making sure all tenants can understand this but especially those who are unable to read or speak English. There was also the exercise held with Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue at Shuttlesworth House that simulated a fire in a flat. Going forward we will involve resident groups further in ensuring the blocks they live in are fire safe.

Please note that the progress in achieving these objectives is what the council has achieved as a whole and not just the work of the resident involvement team.

4. Recommendation

4.1 Housing Scrutiny Sub Committee is asked to:

- a) Note the progress on delivering the objectives and put forward any suggestions or ideas on how we can continue to meet these.

Is this a key decision? No

Do the exempt information categories apply? No

Does Rule 15 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules (call-in and urgency) apply? No

How many appendices does the report contain? None

List of Background Papers: None

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