

**SUBJECT: RESIDENT INVOLVEMENT UPDATE**

**DIRECTORATE: DIRECTORATE OF 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:

- Activities and achievements in 2018
- Objectives 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 feel empowered and have a choice about the service they receive
- 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. Activities and Achievements for 2018**

3.1 In 2018 the Resident Involvement Team undertook a number of key activities and achievements. These included:

- Managed the community investment scheme and advised residents' groups on how to apply. The scheme allows residents' groups to apply for materials, labour and funding for community projects. Completed projects under the scheme include the refurbishment of the new Sincil Bank Community Hub and the construction of sand pits for community groups. Current projects include refurbishments to the Samaritans office and at Mansions of the Future, installation of benches at Croft Street and providing

fencing for Green Synergy's hospital garden. The community investment scheme is supported by the Housing Repairs Service and council's maintenance contractors including Kier Services, Aaron Services and Travis Perkins.

- Produced the Home! magazine and Annual Report. The team has produced three editions of Home! and the Annual Report to Tenants. These publications were supported by the Quality & Performance team and the Communications team.
- Helped the Voids team to re-start tenant inspections of void properties.
- Organised the visit for the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) as part of their programme of visits to social housing landlords across the country. The purpose of the visit was for them to see how we deal with fire safety at our high rise blocks and how we involve residents in fire safety. The day was a success and the MHCLG gave the council praise for the information we provided them. Appendix One contains a copy of this feedback.
- Assisted Lincoln Tenants' Panel in responding to the Government's consultation on the Housing Green Paper.
- Facilitated Lincoln Tenants' Panel so they could carry out scrutiny into key service areas. This included reviewing materials fitted into council homes.
- Delivered the housing fun day that saw over 200 visitors attend to find out about local services.
- Increased the amount of 'likes' on Facebook and improved the page by having more regular posts.
- Carried out activities to help residents tidy and look after their estates. This included bulb and veg planting days.

It should be noted that these achievements were only made possible with the support from other council teams, elected members and involved residents.

#### **4. Main Objectives for 2019**

Over the next 12 months there are several objectives the resident involvement team will focus on. These are:

- Update Tenant Involvement Strategy to take into account Housing Green Paper and get agreement from stakeholders. The current strategy is being reviewed to ensure that it is fit for purpose and will allow the council to meet any new regulations brought in through the Housing Green Paper for resident involvement.
- Improve Lincoln Tenants Panel's (LTP) ability to provide meaningful feedback. LTP currently plays a vital role in providing the council with

feedback and over the next year there will be a focus on improving this ability further.

- Carry out tenant-led scrutiny of services. The Resident Involvement Team will support tenants to carry out this function through the two review groups, mystery shopping and tenant inspections.
- Get more tenants involved and publicise RI achievements. Throughout 2019 the Resident Involvement team will carry out a number of tasks to achieve this. This will include launching the Housing Citizens Panel, carrying out workshops at schools, running DIY sessions and holding a series of estate based events to promote involvement. We will work closely with the Communications Team to ensure that we make as many residents aware as possible about the difference we are making across the city.
- Social media engagement. There is a need to improve our social media and ensure it can be used to effectively involve residents. Planning and consultation is currently taking place on the best platforms to achieve this goal and we are seeking advice from others in the sector on good practice around this.
- Get community investment applications in and publicise success. The team will ensure the council continues to support community investment projects. This will involve advertising the scheme more effectively to get more applications in, advising groups on how to apply, ensuring all contractors contribute and making sure we publicise how the council has supported these projects. We will also look to have greater member involvement in the scheme.
- Help residents have tidy estates and improve them. The appearance of the estates is a major priority for tenants and tackling stigma is an important theme in the Housing Green Paper. Estates that are unkempt reinforce that stigma. Therefore, the team will support the council and tenants to help improve those estates where there is a need to do so. This will involve supporting LTP and other tenants to take community action, identifying hotspot areas for action and assisting with consultation. The team will also look to hold a best kept garden competition and support the 100 years of council housing campaign.
- Involve residents with fire safety. To meet the requirements of the Housing Green Paper and to protect our tenants the team will assist the council to achieve greater involvement with tenants on fire safety. The work will focus on those tenants at high rise blocks.

## **5. Recommendation**

5.1 Housing Scrutiny Sub Committee is asked to:

1. Note the activities and achievements of the resident involvement team in 2018 and objectives for 2019.
2. Provide feedback on how HSSC would like to be involved in delivering

these objectives.

**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?** One

**List of Background Papers:** None

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