

COMMITTEE: SOCIAL INCLUSION

DATE: 7 APRIL 2004

SUBJECT: TENANT PARTICIPATION

REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF SCRUTINY

CONTACT OFFICER: ANGELA FRASER 01582 546070

IMPLICATIONS:

LEGAL ☒ COMMUNITY SAFETY

EQUALITIES ENVIRONMENT

FINANCIAL CONSULTATIONS

STAFFING OTHER

WARDS AFFECTED: ALL

PURPOSE

1. The purpose of this report is to report back to members of the Social Inclusion Committee the progress made on the review of tenant participation.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

2. Social Inclusion Committee is recommended to
 - 2.1 Note the report.
 - 2.2 Make a decision on whether the review should continue or agree for it to be included as part of the stock option appraisal.
 - 2.3 Agree that the next step of the review is to recommend that the Executive set up a joint management board to include the seven housing association partners, regeneration officers,

TCC Reps and officers from within the Housing and Social Services Department to take the review forward.

BACKGROUND

3. Members of this committee agreed the topic of tenant participation at the meeting held on 2 July 2003. The scope for this topic was agreed at this meeting in which a working group consisting of three members from this committee (Cllrs Shaw, Iqbal and McGarvie), officers from within the housing and social services department, representatives from the tenant consultative committee (TCC), one representative from each housing association with the largest stock in Luton and one representative from the smallest stock in Luton. The Director of Scrutiny was asked to draw up the terms of reference (Appendix A) submitted to Members at the 30 September 2003 meeting.

REPORT

4. The first meeting of the working group took place on 20 November 2003 (Appendix B). The purpose of the review was outlined to members of the group who agreed the review should cover four main areas:
 - 4.1 Sheltered Home Schemes – looking at ways of getting them involved
 - 4.2 Developing relationships with housing associations with a possible link into Area Committees
 - 4.3 Regenerating interest in tenants participation across the town for all tenants including those in the private sector
 - 4.4 Identifying housing associations who are not involved in tenant participation and look at how they feedback information to tenants
5. Members of the working group agreed to invite representatives from Aldywck, Pilgrims, Circle 33, Presentation and Hanover (providers of elderly accommodation in Luton) housing associations to share their policies and practices in relation to tenant participation. An invite was also sent to Age Concern and Jill Jackson the manager for home care – older persons based in the Housing and Social Services Department.
6. The meeting of working group held on 28 January 2004 focused on the policies and practices from those housing associations mentioned in paragraph 5 above. Due to the bad weather only Circle 33 and Presentation housing association were able to attend. The notes are attached as Appendix C.

7. A further meeting of the working group was held on 23 February 2004 where Aldywck and Beds Pilgrims housing association were present. The notes are attached as Appendix D.
8. The key points that came out of the presentations received were:
 - 8.1 All have similar structures in place in relation to tenant participation and involve tenants in decisions that are made by the associations and some are more advance than others. Presentation housing association are in a process of conducting a best value review on tenant participation and are rewriting their tenant compact.
 - 8.2 Engaging with different ethnic minority groups and younger residents is also an area faced by the housing associations. Examples given were setting up separate focus groups and training for ethnic minority residents encouraging them to participation. In terms of younger residents Circle 33 hold special day trips organised which have proved a success and are looking up setting up a younger peoples forum.
 - 8.3 Communication is a major factor, in that the associations feel that little communication is made between them and the Council. Examples given were issues around regeneration bids that the council has been involved in, which causes duplication in work carried out in certain areas.
 - 8.4 The is also a need for sharing information which was emphasised e.g. having a website link where information could be shared between the council and the housing associations
 - 8.5 General consensus was agreed on the creation of a joint management board arrangement with the council and the seven housing association partners.
9. So far there has been no representation received from the Hanover Housing Association who specialise in accommodation for the elderly in Luton. The working group has not been able to elicit the views from the housing and social services department as to how views are expressed from elderly people in home care facilities. Members should also be aware that no response has been received from Age Concern who was invited to participate in this review.

10. A draft project plan has been produced detailing the scope agreed at the Social Inclusion meeting held on 2 July 2003. The work emanating from the working group has been in accordance with the project plan (Appendix E).

11. Members should also note the overall aim of this review was to:

- 11.1 Enhance the effectiveness of tenant participation in Luton;
- 11.2 Enhance communications with tenants and residents to improve empowerment and address the wider issues of social inclusion and diversity;
- 11.3 Produce a revised and strengthened tenants compact

The review has only covered 11.1 and 11.2 above and has yet to achieve 11.3

12. Members should also note that out of the objectives originally set the working group has managed so far to:

- 12.1 Review the current structures in place for tenant participation
- 12.2 Review the funding and support for tenant participation and explore opportunities for external funding and capacity building
- 12.3 Identify and learn from good practice
- 12.4 Review the role and support provided by other social landlords in Luton
- 12.5 Identify and address the interface with area committees, and other area based indicatives
- 12.6 Look at opportunities for participation by tenants of housing associations with smaller stocks in Luton.

13. However; there are some objectives, which have not been addressed:

- 13.1 Consider equality issues and the aim to achieve inclusive communities
- 3.2 Examining the findings of the best value review on Landord Services

- 13.3 Identify and address links with the stock options appraisal
- 13.4 Consider diversity of tenure
- 14. All of the objectives have been built into the draft project plan to be address over the coming months. Members of this committee were reminded at the meeting on 10 February 2004 of the Councils impending stock option appraisal that is shortly to commence and part of that appraisal would include tenant participation.
- 15. The policies and statements from four housing associations have been presented to the working group including the policies in place at Luton Borough Council. The general consensus identified by the working group was they all have a similar structure in place to those at Luton Borough Council. However, some housing associations place more emphasis on tenants involvements than others, but all agreed for a partnership working arrangement throughout Luton before tenant participation to be effective. Consensus was also reached on funding aspects. It was agreed for the Council to work jointly with the seven housing association partners in respect of regeneration bids so as to make them easily accessible and evenly spread throughout the town.

PROPOSAL/OPTION

- 16. Members of social inclusion scrutiny committee are asked to consider whether the review of tenant participation should still go ahead bearing in mind that the stock options appraisal is shortly due to take place and will include tenant participation. By agreeing to this the Committee can maintain an overview of the appraisal as it proceeds and can make recommendations to the Executive. Members should also be aware that the outcomes of the stock options review would be available in 2005.
- 17. Members of this committee are also asked to consider the option of a joint management board to include LBC, the seven housing association partners, two members from the TCC and one member from this committee. The role of the joint management board would be to discuss issues around housing management services including funding allocations and also to discuss the various consultation methods available for inclusion of tenants. It is envisage that this arrangement could be run along the same lines as the Housing Association Regeneration Initiatives (HARI) Group arrangement that is in place at Watford (Appendix F).

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

18. Members of this committee should also be aware of the legal implications issued by the solicitor of the council in relation to membership of the working group formed by the Executive on the stock options review:

“There is a serious difficulty with the inclusion of the Chair of the Social Inclusion Scrutiny Committee or any Scrutiny Member. Firstly, there is an absolute statutory bar on any mixed group of Executive and Scrutiny Members serving on a decision making body which deals with Executive functions (Area Committees are an exception but these are not relevant here). Secondly, if the Chair of the Social Inclusion Scrutiny Committee is involved in this matter then he will be debarred in taking part in any scrutiny of this process carried out by the Social Inclusion Scrutiny Committee, as he will be deemed to have a personal and prejudicial interest under the Council's Code of Conduct for Members.”

APPENDIX

19. The following appendices are attached to this report:

Appendix A – Terms of Reference 30 September 2003
Appendix B – Working Group Notes – 10 November 2003
Appendix C– Working Group Notes - 28 January 2004
Appendix D – Working Group Notes - 23 February 2004
Appendix E – Draft project plan
Appendix F - Housing Association Regeneration Initiatives (HARI) Group

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972, SECTION 100D

20. Housing Association Regeneration Initiatives (HARI) Group