



**NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL**  
**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**31<sup>st</sup> January 2013**

**BRIEFING NOTE:**

**Tenant Engagement Strategy – Consultation Feedback**

**1 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The new Tenant Engagement Strategy not only enables NBC to comply with the Homes and Communities Agency regulatory framework but also ensures tenants are involved in the decision making process and the development of service improvement proposals.
- 1.2 NBC has a good track record of engaging successfully with its tenants and the new strategy builds on the previous successes in areas such as Tenant Audit and Mystery Shopping, demonstrated by the fact that a tenant was invited in late 2012 to speak at a national conference on their role as a Tenant Auditor.
- 1.3 Good Quality tenant engagement delivers benefits for both Tenants and NBC as a landlord.
- 1.4 Tenant Benefits will include,
  - Improved services
  - Increased Opportunities for Involvement
  - Stronger Voice
  - More influence
  - Increased knowledge
  - Ability to challenge current and propose future services
- 1.5 NBC Benefits will include,
  - Assurance that delivering a good quality service
  - Challenge from customers
  - New Ideas
  - Value for money
  - Improved Services
- 1.6 The Strategy enables tenants to become involved at a level that they feel comfortable at in terms of both skill set and time commitment they are able to offer.

- 1.7 A new level of engagement is proposed by the strategy, namely a Tenant Scrutiny Board and panels.
- 1.8 The scrutiny model like the other levels of engagement contained within the strategy will be inclusive and accommodate all who wish to be involved.
- 1.9 Each of the scrutiny panels will deal with a specific area of the Housing Service and also elect a chair who will serve on the Scrutiny Board.
- 1.10 The Scrutiny Board would meet the requirements to fulfil the designated tenant panel role as part of the democratic filter highlighted in the Localism Act. This panel will by using their local knowledge if requested by a tenant become involved in the resolution of issues between tenants and NBC as a landlord.

## **2 Consultation**

- 2.1 All tenants have been invited to one of 5 meeting held at various points across the Borough and additionally have received a questionnaire asking if they support the proposed scrutiny model.
- 2.2 As of the 22<sup>nd</sup> January (consultation ends on the 31<sup>st</sup> January) 180 completed questionnaires had been returned with 95%+ in support of the proposal.
- 2.3 Of the 5 meetings held , Meeting 1 at Kings Heath attended by 17 , Meeting 2 at Lakeview attended by 16 and Meeting 3 at the Guildhall attended by 65 tenants ( a verbal update of numbers attending meetings 4 and 5 will be given.)
- 2.4 The feedback from the meetings held to date has been positive and supportive of the proposal and a large number of attendees have expressed an interest in becoming involved at one of the levels of engagement offered by the strategy.
- 2.5 In addition to consulting tenants, the Consultation Institute ( national body) nave monitored our consultation method Final report due end of January), verbal indications are that we have followed best practice and guidelines and they approve the methods employed to ensure effective consultation around the introduction of a new tenant engagement strategy.
- 2.6 The Tenant Participation and Advisory Service (TPAS) along with the Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH) operate a joint accreditation system for tenant scrutiny models. NBC have applied for pre implementation accreditation and an assessment has been undertaken with the final report due at the end of January, verbal indications are that the proposed model of scrutiny meets all of the requirements and would deliver a robust level of Co Regulation with our tenants.

### **3 CONCLUSION**

- 3.1 Implementation of the new Tenant engagement strategy will enable NBC to deliver on its promise to involve tenants in both the decision making process and involving them in service delivery now and in the future.
  
- 3.2 Consultation undertaken shows high levels of support from tenants and the method of consultation employed has received the approval of national bodies who are leaders in their respective fields.

Author: Tim Ansell – Housing Services manager

23<sup>rd</sup> January 2013