



Name of meeting: Housing H+S Ad Hoc Scrutiny

Date: 10th November 2021

Title of report: New Governance Arrangements

Purpose of report: To Provide the panel with an overview of the New Governance arrangements introduced in the Homes and Neighbourhoods Service since the transfer of the Housing Management and Maintenance Services from KNH in April 2021.

Key Decision - Is it likely to result in spending or saving £250k or more, or to have a significant effect on two or more electoral wards?	No
Key Decision - Is it in the <u>Council's Forward Plan (key decisions and private reports)?</u>	Key Decision – No
The Decision - Is it eligible for call in by Scrutiny?	Not Applicable
Date signed off by <u>Strategic Director</u> & name	Naz Parkar, Service Director Homes and Neighbourhoods
Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Finance?	29th October 2021
Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Legal Governance and Commissioning?	Not Applicable
Cabinet member portfolio	Cllr Cathy Scott

Electoral wards affected: ALL

Ward councillors consulted: No

Public:

Has GDPR been considered? Yes

1. Summary

In preparation for the transfer of the Housing Management and Maintenance Services from Kirklees Neighbourhood Housing (KNH) to the council on 1st April 2021 a governance structure was developed and implemented to provide operational oversight and scrutiny of the service. This structure is set out in appendix 1 attached to this report.

Whilst the ultimate authority and control rests with the Council's Cabinet (as the Registered Provider) the structure set out in the appendix provides the additional oversight of the homes and neighbourhood service and provide advice to the Cabinet (through the portfolio holder) on any policy or strategic matters that require the Cabinet's decision. In addition, the structure provides for the operational oversight of service delivery and provides a direct route for the tenant's voice to be heard in line with regulatory requirements.

The remainder of this paper will set out the key bodies within the governance structure, how they relate together and support the Homes and Neighbourhood service in its delivery to tenants and leaseholders.

2. Information required to take a decision

Housing Advisory Board (HAB)

The HAB consists of up to twelve members comprising up to six tenants or leaseholders of the council, up to four co-opted members (recruited for specific housing expertise) one council officer (Executive Director Growth and Regeneration). The panel is chaired by the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Democracy who is the twelfth member. The Board has no delegated authority (being advisory) however it has a direct link to the Cabinet through the portfolio holder.

The key duties of the panel are:

- To provide the Cabinet with views and advice on housing related strategies and policies
- To ensure the service meets the Consumer regulatory standards
- To review and track risks across the service
- To ensure that Value for Money is delivered and that budgets are monitored and managed effectively

(Full terms of reference are available at appendix 2)

In undertaking these duties, the panel supports the portfolio holder and Cabinet to ensure that regulatory standards are met and that the tenant's voice is at the heart of service delivery. It provides essential oversight for the homes and neighbourhoods service and supports the council in discharging its regulatory obligations.

The board currently meets on a bi monthly basis with some induction and training sessions interspersed with these formal meetings. The board agreed

that's after six months of operation it would undertake a review to ensure the effectiveness of the arrangements that have been put in place.

Tenants Advisory and Grants Panel

The panel comprises up to 12 tenants and leaseholders of Kirklees Council. The panel meets bi monthly and considers a range of matters let's have a direct influence on tenants. The panel provides a standing report on its activities to the Housing Advisory Board and in particular advises the Board on policy and regulatory matters from a tenant's perspective. The panel also has a role in making small grants for tenant involvement activities to tenants groups across the borough. In summary the key focus of the panel are:

- to ensure the voice of the tenants is heard
- to inform and shape turn facing policies and strategies
- to sense check tenant facing correspondence
- to work closely with tenants and residents' associations
- to commission and oversee tenant scrutiny activities

Whilst this panel was formed as part of the new governance arrangements it builds on the activities of the tenants involvement activities undertaken in KNH and in particular the work of the service improvements and challenge panel.

Terms of reference are attached as appendix 2

Building Safety Assurance Board

The building safety assurance board comprises seven officers from across Kirklees and is chaired by Colin Parr strategic Director for Environment and Climate Change. The group meets monthly and provides a report to each meeting of the Housing Advisory Board. The group also has direct access and reports to the councils health and safety oversight board bringing any matters of note to their attention. The board maintains operational oversight of the following key compliance areas including building safety governance; strategic planning and risk management; building safety compliance and regulatory oversight; and communication with tenants and leaseholders on building safety matters. Standing agenda items for the board are as follows:

- Minutes of previous meeting/arising actions
- Review of performance: Building Safety Review (Quarterly only)
- Review of Monthly Key Performance Indicators – highlight report
- Building Safety Improvement plan
- Audit recommendations
- Forward Plan Actions and Emerging Key Decisions
- AOB

The bold terms of reference can be found at appendix 4

Assurance Framework

The above bodies are designed to provide a triangle of assurance by focusing on three key regulatory and compliance matter such as building safety regulations, tenants voice and housing regulatory standards. With each body bringing their skills and experience to bear on these areas and reporting their finding to each other for combined scrutiny and oversight. This assurance framework addresses brought to light during the Hackett review and as part of this puts tenants and their voice at the heart of the governance framework.

The strength of the arrangement is that it brings the critical skills and experience of tenants, experts and officers together to focus on our key compliance and regulatory objectives.

Whilst still relatively new this framework is bedding in well with reporting lines established and key information flows working well. A review is planned to identify how the framework is embedding and identify any areas for further enhancement.

Policy Framework

On moving back to the authority many of the former KNH policies fell away in favour the council equivalent. However, the homes and neighbourhoods service has retained the following service level policies.

Compliance Policies

Asbestos
Legionella
Electrical safety
Fire safety
Lift repairs and maintenance
Gas safety

Housing Policies

Anti-social behaviour
Safeguarding
Domestic abuse
Approach to preventing rent arrears and evictions
Leaseholder arrears
Playschemes
Service risk
Quality

The compliance policies in particular have been retained as they focus on domestic (rather than commercial) properties and focus particularly on protecting tenants in their homes. These policies are all currently under revision to take account of the new building safety team this has been established. Policies will be reviewed on at least a three-year cycle less other legal, regulatory or service changes require an earlier revision.

3. Implications for the Council

3.1 Working with People

As part of our service excellence initiative homes and neighbourhoods has undertaken an extensive exercise consulting with a tenant, staff and wider stakeholders to identify the key deliverables and outputs that the service should focus upon. This exercise is informing the new Service Plan from 2022 to 25.

3.2 Working with Partners

Opportunities to work with both internal and external partners has been identified as part of the service excellence initiative.

3.3 Place Based Working

Service has always operated on a patch-based model and is reviewing this to work more closely with other department across the council in a place-based approach.

3.4 Climate Change and Air Quality

The service is planning to deliver a number of passive houses as part of its development programme together with enhanced insulation standards to support fuel efficiency.

3.5 Improving outcomes for children

Not directly addressed in this paper

3.6 Other (eg Legal/Financial or Human Resources) Consultees and their opinions

The homes and neighbourhoods service is currently developing it's 2022 to 25 Service plan that will address human financial and other resource implications to deliver an efficient and effective housing management and maintenance and reinvestment service.

4. Next steps and timelines

The new Governance structure will be reviewed in late 2021 early 2022 to ensure it is operating as intended and where needed that any changes are made to ensure its efficiency and effectiveness.

5. Officer recommendations and reasons

To note the Governance framework established for the Homes and Neighbourhoods Service.

6. Cabinet Portfolio Holder's recommendations

None provided

7. Contact officer

Eric Hughes: Head of Business Assurance and Transformation

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8. Background Papers and History of Decisions

As presented to the Panel

9. Service Director responsible

Naz Parkar, Service Director Homes and Neighbourhoods