

**Manchester City Council  
Report for Resolution**

**Report to:** Constitutional and Nomination Committee – 18 May 2022  
Full Council – 18 May 2022

**Subject:** Establishment of a Housing Advisory Committee

**Report of:** Strategic Director (Growth and Development)

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### **Summary**

The purpose of this report is to establish a Housing Advisory Committee, following the decision to bring back in house the Northwards Housing Arm's Length Management Organisation (ALMO) that used to manage the Council's housing stock.

The report also provides a summary to the background to the decisions to create a Housing Advisory Committee.

### **Recommendations**

The Constitutional and Nomination Committee is requested to:

- (1) Recommend that Council agree to the establishment of the Housing Advisory Committee as a non-decision making advisory Committee;
- (2) Recommend to the Council the Elected Member membership of the Housing Advisory Committee;
- (3) Recommend that the Council confirm the appointment of the nominated Tenant Representatives to the Housing Advisory Committee set out in this report; and
- (4) Recommend that the Council confirm the appointment of the nominated co-opted non-resident members of the Housing Advisory Committee set out in this report.

Council is recommended to:

- (1) Agree the establishment of a Housing Advisory Committee as a non-decision making advisory committee;
  - (2) Approve the proposed terms of reference for the Committee set out at Appendix 1 of the report;
  - (3) Agree the recommended Elected Member, co-opted Tenant Representative and co-opted non-resident membership of the Housing Advisory Committee;
  - (4) Note the Role Profiles for the Tenant Representatives on the Housing Advisory Committee; and
  - (5) Note that whilst the meetings of the Housing Advisory Committee will be held within the North Manchester area, they will be open to the public to attend and observe proceedings.
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**Wards Affected** – Higher Blackley, Charlestown, Crumpsall, Harpurhey, Moston,

Cheetham, Miles Platting & Newton Heath, Ancoats & Beswick, Piccadilly, Ardwick, Clayton & Openshaw

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**Contact Officers:**

Name: David Ashmore  
Position: Director of Housing Operations  
E-mail: david.ashmore@manchester.gov.uk

Name: Angela Raftery  
Position: Assistant Director of Housing Operations  
E-mail: angela.raftery@northwardshousing.co.uk

**Background documents (available for public inspection):**

The following documents disclose important facts on which the report is based and have been relied upon in preparing the report. Copies of the background documents are available up to 4 years after the date of the meeting. If you would like a copy please contact one of the contact officers above.

- Council Housing Stock – Governance Arrangements – resources and Governance Scrutiny – 7 March 2022 and 7 December 2021
- Housing Revenue Account Delivery model - Northwards ALMO Review – Economy Scrutiny 14 January 2021
- Housing Revenue Account Delivery model - Northwards ALMO Review – Executive 20 January 2021

## **1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 On 20 January 2021, Manchester City Council agreed to bring the ALMO Northwards Housing back in-house, agreeing to insource the housing management and maintenance function.
- 1.2 A report was considered by both the Council's Economy Scrutiny Committee and the Executive which set out the conclusions of the test of opinion of tenants and leaseholders on the proposal for MCC to take direct control of the management of the housing service.
- 1.3 The transfer of the ALMO took place on 5<sup>th</sup> July 2021 and one of the key milestones in integrating with the Council is to establish the new governance arrangement, replacing the transitional Shadow Board currently in situ, to oversee the effectiveness and development of MCC Housing Operations.
- 1.4 The report considered by both Scrutiny and the Executive in January 2021 recommended that the governance of the new council-controlled service offer of housing operations in North Manchester would include opportunities for tenants to be involved and empowered in the decision making about services to homes and communities
- 1.5 This report seeks to establish the new Housing Advisory Committee, its Terms of Reference, the role profiles of its tenant representatives, and next steps

## **2.0 Background**

- 2.1 Following the decision to bring the ALMO back in house, a key consideration was to establish the new governance model for the Housing Service, in line with the council's constitution and critically, to ensure resident representation in the oversight of their social housing provider (MCC). The new governance arrangements will have oversight of significant aspects such as
  - The implementation of the social housing white paper, including the emerging consumer standards and tenancy satisfaction measures
  - The performance of the council's housing repairs and maintenance service
  - Maintaining Decent Homes and Fire and Building Safety
- 2.2 As such, the Council's Resource and Audit Scrutiny Committee (RAGOS) considered and refined the initial Housing Advisory Committee proposals from officers, recommending a series of improvements and clarifications, which have been incorporated into the final report, particularly in relation to the Terms of Reference.
- 2.3 In addition to the development of the governance proposals with the Council's Resource and Audit Scrutiny Committee, the Director of Housing Operations commissioned an internal audit report to support the development of a robust and appropriate set of arrangements.

2.4 The Council's Internal Audit gave a reasonable opinion to the proposals and identified a number of areas of strength and four recommendations for the service to take forward.

2.5 The areas of strength identified in the internal audit report included;

- Significant consideration had been given to setting up governance structures which will provide a line of accountability and community engagement from tenant and resident groups through the proposed advisory committee and to the Council's Scrutiny and Executive.
- The proposals align with wider Council Governance arrangements and with Housing Regulations and Standards, documented in the 2021 Social Housing White Paper.
- The key themes of the White Paper had formed the foundations of the governance arrangements and that these will be incorporated into the new Resident Charter, which will become a focal point of the committee.
- The commitment to create a Resident Charter, giving tenants the opportunity to influence the development of key performance indicators (KPIs) that are meaningful to them.

2.6 The four recommendations in the internal audit report were in relation to committee documentation and membership, the oversight and ownership of the risk register and finalising the approaches to gathering performance data and reporting requirements, all of which have since been progressed

2.7 Consequently, it has been agreed that a new Housing Advisory Committee will be established, composed of six elected councillors, five co-opted tenant representatives who live in council housing in the North Manchester area and in addition, up to three non-resident co-opted members to be appointed, on the recommendation of the Committee, to provide independent specialist support and advice.

2.8 With the establishment of this committee, the Council will be delivering on the standards set out in the White Paper.

### **3.0 Governance of the Housing Advisory Committee**

3.1 The committee will comply with the Council's Constitution, including the Council Procedure Rules and Access to Information Procedure Rules. The meetings will be serviced by the Council's Commercial Governance Team, who will work closely with the Council's Governance and Scrutiny Support Unit to ensure all the necessary legal requirements for convening meetings are met.

3.2 The Housing Advisory Committee will be a non-decision making advisory

committee appointed under Section 102(4) of the Local Government Act 1972.

- 3.3 Meetings will be held on a regular agreed basis throughout the year, at least 6 times annually in the municipal year. Dates of meetings will be scheduled to be included in the Council's annual timetable of meetings.
- 3.4 All meetings will be in person and held in the North Manchester area and will, in same way as any other Council committee meetings, be open to the public to attend and observe proceedings (unless business that is 'confidential' or 'exempt' for the purposes of the Access to Information Procedure Rules is being considered).
- 3.5 The meetings will be chaired by the Executive Member with responsibility for Housing Management.
- 3.6 The meeting quorum will be five members and must include a mix of both Elected Members and Tenant Representatives to ensure balance.
- 3.7 The Housing Advisory Committee will ensure that tenants are able, on an annual basis, to hold a review of the whole service and report to elected members so that the service has proper oversight and accountability.

#### **4.0 Terms of Reference**

- 4.1 The recommended Terms of Reference, are set out in Appendix 1.
- 4.2 These are the proposed Terms of Reference as drafted by the Director and Assistant Director of Housing Operations, following consultation with the Council's Resources and Governance Scrutiny Committee in December 2021 and March 2022
- 4.3 Any future proposed changes to the Housing Advisory Committee's terms of reference, will be presented to the Council for approval.

#### **5 Appointment of Elected Members to the Committee**

- 5.1 In accordance with the proposed terms of reference for the Housing Advisory Committee it is requested that the Council appoint the Executive Member with portfolio responsibility for Housing Management as an ex-officio member (and Chair) of the Committee. The Council is also requested to appoint five other elected members of the Council to the Committee.
- 5.2 Those five other elected members would ordinarily all be members representing North Manchester Wards (i.e. Charlestown, Crumpsall, Harpurhey, Higher Blackley, Moston, Cheetham and Miles Platting and Newton Heath). However, this may not be possible as the Committee will be subject to political balance rules and consequently one seat on the proposed Housing Advisory Committee falls to be allocated to a member of one of the Council's minority groups, with the rest of the elected member seats being allocated to the Council's majority group. The minority group that is allocated a

seat would be entitled to take up its seat (if it wishes to do so), notwithstanding that it currently has no members representing the North Manchester Wards.

## **6 Appointment of Tenant Representatives**

6.1 The council conducted a comprehensive recruitment campaign, with the aim of generating sizeable resident/tenant interest in the advisory committee roles. The campaign included digital and traditional methods targeting;

- All 2,218 residents registered to the service's digital services 'My Account'
- All 631 residents who are registered with the Northwards Network
- All 12,211 residents living in the Council's Northwards properties.
- Website cross-selling
- Social Media via Facebook, Instagram and Twitter

The level of interest was significant with 336 residents registering an interest, which led to 79 applications being received, and subsequently 15 local residents being interviewed by existing resident Shadow Board members and the Assistant Director Housing Operations.

Following this extensive process and all Council recruitment processes the nominated co-opted tenant representatives put forward for appointment to the Housing Advisory Committee are:

- Christine Leyland
- Phil Foran
- Natalie O'Reilly
- Norman Hesketh-Hart
- Susan Taylor

## **7 Appointment of Independent Co-opted Non-Residents/Independents to Housing Advisory Committee**

7.1 In addition to the Housing Advisory Committee's elected member and tenant representatives, aligned with good practice in the social housing sector and as per the Council's Resources and Audit Scrutiny Committee recommendations, the report puts forward three independent non-resident nominees for appointment as co-opted members of the Housing Advisory Committee. The independent roles are comparative to Non Exec roles which sit on the Boards of Registered Providers, bringing industry expertise and external challenge to the proposed governance arrangements.

7.2 The independent roles were advertised through the professional social media platform, LinkedIn and the North Manchester Business Network and has been successful in recruiting three local professionals with industry expertise and knowledge in the housing sector, with a clear resident focus including specialisms in digital services, community working and delivery of capital programmes. Under the proposed terms of reference for the Housing Advisory Committee, there would be ordinarily be a formal recommendation from the

Housing Advisory Committee to the Council in respect of nominees for the position of non-resident co-opted member of the Committee. However, as the Housing Advisory Committee has yet to be established, such a recommendation is not possible on this occasion.

7.3 Following the Council's recruitment process the nominated co-opted non-residents put forward for appointment to the Housing Advisory Committee are;

- Chris Forrester
- Safeena Rather
- Stephen Repton

7.4 The Committee will be subject to the Council's Constitution, including the Council Procedure Rules and the Access to Information Procedure Rules, in line with other Council committees. All Committee Members must sign and adhere to the Member Code of Conduct as adopted by Manchester City Council.

## **8 Next Steps**

8.1 To formally constitute the Housing Advisory Committee, subject to approval, and to begin onboarding the new members with a series of introductory sessions over May and June, prior to the initial committee meeting in July 2022.

## **9 Recommendations**

9.1 The recommendations are set out at the front of this report

## Appendix 1: Draft Terms of Reference

### Housing Advisory Committee Terms of Reference – May 2022

#### Purpose:

The Committee is responsible for overseeing the delivery of the housing services to the Council's housing stock (formerly managed by Northwards Housing); primarily in, but not limited to, North Manchester. This includes the reviewing of the performance of all housing functions and the engagement of residents in the effective delivery of services.

As an advisory committee it has no decision-making powers of its own but may make recommendations to the Council or the Council's Executive on matters relating to the discharge of their housing functions, insofar as those functions relate to the Council's housing stock.

The Committee's remit does not extend to the council's PFI, This City or properties managed by Registered Providers.

#### Membership

The Committee will be composed of:

- **six** elected councillors - The Committee will be chaired by the Executive Member with portfolio responsibility for Housing Management (who will be an ex-officio member of the Committee) and the remaining five elected councillors will ordinarily represent North Manchester Wards (i.e. Charlestown, Crumpsall, Harpurhey, Higher Blackley, Moston, Cheetham and Miles Platting and Newton Heath).
- **five** co-opted residents from the Council's housing stock - Residents will be appointed to the Committee by the Council. Elections may need to be used to decide which nominees are put forward to the Council for consideration. Resident appointees are expected to serve a minimum two-year term.
- up to **three** co-opted non-resident members - Co-optees can be appointed to the Committee by the Council, following recommendations from the committee. Co-optees will provide independent specialist support and advice when required.

As this is an advisory committee all members of the committee may vote, including co-opted members.

The committee will be subject to political balance rules.

#### Arrangements

Meetings will be held on a regular agreed basis throughout the year, at least 6 times annually. Dates of meetings will be scheduled to be included in the Council's annual timetable of meetings. All meetings will be in person and, where possible, will be held



at suitable venues in the North Manchester area. The meetings will be serviced by the Council's Commercial Governance Team, working closely with the Council's Governance and Scrutiny Support Unit.

Meeting Quorum is five and must include a mix of both elected members and resident representatives to ensure balance. Training will be arranged for Members so that they can contribute fully to the governance and oversight of services and provide appropriate challenge where necessary.

All committee members will demonstrate and reflect MCC's three Equality Objectives

- Knowing Manchester Better
- Improving Life Chances
- Celebrating Our Diversity

### **Conduct**

The Committee will be subject to the Council's Constitution, including the Council Procedure Rules and the Access to Information Procedure Rules, in line with other Council committees. All Committee Members must sign and adhere to the Member Code of Conduct as adopted by Manchester City Council.

### **General**

These Terms of Reference will be reviewed on an annual basis at the start of the municipal year and if any changes are required, they will be taken back to Council for approval.

### **Committee Responsibilities**

Within its remit the committee will:

- Monitor performance and delivery of the consumer standard (Residents' Charter) including the new tenancy satisfaction measures.
- Promote equalities and the diverse interest of residents and leaseholders.
- Monitor the impacts of investment in ensuring the Council maintains decent homes, fire and building safety and customer satisfaction.
- Provide reports to the Council's Executive and to relevant Council Scrutiny Committees (Communities and Equalities; Resources and Governance).
- Review draft reports on significant decisions to be taken by the Council in relation to the housing function.
- Be consulted on and advise on key changes to strategy, key policies, significant service changes and development proposals.
- Aim for the composition of the Committee and Resident Groups to be reflective of the diverse communities within North Manchester (and the city).
- Have sight of any scrutiny reports that are produced from any service audits or reviews that are carried out.
- Provide oversight of the savings to the Housing Revenue Account projected by virtue of the transfer of the service back to the council.

- Receive and consider complaints data to inform service delivery.
- Have oversight of the risk register for the housing service.
- Review the connectivity of the core housing provision with neighbourhoods and other community delivery impacts. Particular reference to environmental investment and community safety.
- Monitor the debt management and financial inclusion services to ensure that tenancies are sustained whilst income is managed.
- Act in accordance with the Council's powers and responsibilities and its Constitution

## **Appendix 2: Role Profile of Tenant Representatives**

### **Housing Advisory Committee Role Profile for Committee Member for Housing Advisory Committee**

#### **Purpose of the Housing Advisory Committee:**

The Committee is responsible for overseeing the delivery of the housing services to the Council's housing stock (formerly managed by Northwards Housing); primarily in, but not limited to, North Manchester. This includes the reviewing of the performance of all housing functions and the engagement of residents in the effective delivery of services.

As an advisory committee it has no decision-making powers of its own but may make recommendations to the Council or the Council's Executive on matters relating to the discharge of their housing functions, insofar as those functions relate to the Council's housing stock.

The Committee's remit does not extend to the council's PFI, This City or properties managed by Registered Providers.

#### **Role:**

Committee Member for Housing Advisory Committee

#### **Main Contacts:**

Director and Assistant Director of the Housing Service, Elected Members Tenants and Residents

#### **Payments:**

This is a voluntary position however reasonable travel expenses to attend the meetings will be reimbursed.

#### **Time Commitment:**

The appointment will be for an initial two-year term. Committee members will be expected to attend six committee meetings per municipal year. Typically these meetings are held early evening between 6-8pm in North Manchester

#### **Training and Development Opportunities:**

Manchester City Council will provide training and development opportunities to support committee members in their role.

#### **Key Areas of Responsibilities**

The Housing Advisory Committee will have no decision-making powers of its own but will make recommendations to the Council or the Council's Executive on matters

relating to the housing service. Key areas of responsibility for committee members are:

- Review performance and delivery of the consumer standard (Residents' Charter) including the new satisfaction measures.
- Promote equalities and the diverse interest of residents and leaseholders.
- Review the impacts of investment in ensuring the Council maintains decent homes, fire and building safety and customer satisfaction.
- Provide reports to the Council's Executive and to relevant Scrutiny Committees (Communities and Equalities & RAGOS).
- Review draft reports on significant decisions to be taken by the Council in relation to the housing function.
- Be consulted on and advise on key changes to strategy, key policies, significant service changes and development proposals.
- Aim for the composition of the Committee and Resident Groups to be reflective of the diverse communities within North Manchester (and the city).
- Have sight of any scrutiny reports that are produced from any service audits or reviews that are carried out.
- Provide oversight of the savings to the HRA projected by virtue of the transfer of the service back to the council.
- Receive and consider complaints data to inform service delivery.
- Have oversight of the risk register for the housing service.
- Review the connectivity of the core housing provision with neighbourhoods and other community delivery impacts. Particular reference to environmental investment and community safety.
- Review the debt management and financial inclusion services to ensure that tenancies are sustained whilst income is managed.
- Act in accordance with the Council's powers and responsibilities and its Constitution.

### **Personal Qualities, Knowledge and Experience:**

The following characteristics, knowledge, and/or experiences (or commitment to gain them) would be advantageous to the role of a Committee Member:

- Understanding of the needs and aspirations of the communities in north Manchester
- Understanding of the housing delivery service and its aims and objectives
- Ability to work with others and build relationships
- Good Communication skills
- Confidence and Enthusiasm
- Commitment to the Committee
- Commitment to training and development to perform this role
- Personal integrity, honesty, and objectivity