

Renewal of Housing Ombudsman Scheme Membership 21/22

Date: 05 October 2021

Report of: Service Manager, Tenant Engagement

Report to: Chief Officer Housing

Will the decision be open for call in? Yes No

Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? Yes No

What is this report about?

Including how it contributes to the city's and council's ambitions

- The purpose of the [Housing Ombudsman Scheme](#) is to enable tenants and other individuals to have complaints about members (i.e. the Housing Service provided by Leeds City Council) investigated by a Housing Ombudsman.
- The role of the Housing Ombudsman is to resolve disputes involving members of the Scheme, including making awards of compensation or other remedies when appropriate, as well as to support effective landlord / tenant dispute resolution.
- The Housing Ombudsman Scheme is approved by the Secretary of State under section 51 of and Schedule 2 to the Housing Act 1996. The Act requires social landlords, to be members of an approved scheme.
- In addition to the primary purpose of enabling the Housing Ombudsman to resolve disputes, make awards of compensation to tenants or leaseholders or to instruct other remedies, our membership of the scheme also gives the council access to wider opportunities to learn from complaints investigated, access training and development and identify good practice.
- Actively participating in the Housing Ombudsman Scheme helps support our wider council ambitions to deliver high quality public services and for tenants and leaseholders to be able to live in good quality, affordable homes in clean and well cared for places.

Recommendations

- a) That the Chief Officer Housing approve the renewal of Housing Ombudsman Scheme Membership for 2021/22 in line with Contract Procedure Rules 9.5 i.e.:
 - a. *Where the relevant Chief Officer considers there is genuinely no competition such that only a particular organisation or provider can meet the Council's specific requirements a waiver of CPRs 9.1 and 9.2 need not be obtained. However, before making any decision the relevant Chief Officer must consult with PACS and the lack of competition must be formally evidenced and approved by the relevant Chief Officer before the contract is entered into*

Why is the proposal being put forward?

- 1 The purpose of the Housing Ombudsman Scheme is to enable tenants and other individuals to have complaints about members (i.e. the Housing Service provided by Leeds City Council) investigated by a Housing Ombudsman. The role of the Ombudsman is to resolve disputes involving members of the Scheme, including making awards of compensation or other remedies when appropriate, as well as to support effective landlord / tenant dispute resolution.
- 2 The Housing Ombudsman Scheme is approved by the Secretary of State under section 51 of and Schedule 2 to the Housing Act 1996. The Act requires social landlords, to be members of an approved scheme.

What impact will this proposal have?

Wards affected:

Have ward members been consulted? Yes No

- 3 In addition to the primary purpose of enabling the Housing Ombudsman to resolve disputes, make awards of compensation to tenants or leaseholders or to instruct other remedies, our membership of the scheme also gives the council access to wider opportunities to learn from complaints, access training and development and identify good practice.

What consultation and engagement has taken place?

- 4 No consultation with Executive Members or local ward members has taken place as this is a mandatory renewal of an existing scheme.

What are the resource implications?

- 5 The 2021/22 membership renewal for the scheme is £123,716.16. This is in line with the number of council homes and leaseholders in management by LCC at £2.16 per home/per leaseholder.

What are the legal implications?

- 6 This is a Significant Operational Decision that is not subject to call-in. There are no grounds for keeping the contents of this report confidential under the Access to Information Rules.
- 7 The Housing Ombudsman Scheme is approved by the Secretary of State under section 51 of and Schedule 2 to the Housing Act 1996. The Act requires social landlords, to be members of an approved scheme.

What are the key risks and how are they being managed?

- 8 Membership of the scheme and access to Housing Ombudsman services helps ensure we reduce service risks as a whole by encouraging effective dispute resolution, fair outcomes for tenants and leaseholders and, if appropriate, recommendations for service improvement.

Does this proposal support the council's three Key Pillars?

Inclusive Growth Health and Wellbeing Climate Emergency

9 Membership of the scheme enables access to sector wide good practice information, that will include good practice on health and well-being, inclusion and climate change as part and parcel of the services we give.

Options, timescales and measuring success

What other options were considered?

10 No similar scheme is available.

How will success be measured?

11 Our membership of the scheme is a legislative requirement. We aim to actively participate in the scheme and activity required by the scheme, for example, completing an annual complaints handling code self-assessment that will help improve tenants and leaseholders experiences of our service.

What is the timetable for implementation?

12 The scheme is based on an annual membership.

Appendices

13 None

Background papers

14 None