

Discontinuation of Runnymede Borough Council's Interaction with the RCRA (Housing, Maggie Ward)

Synopsis of report:

The Runnymede Council Residents Association (RCRA) which was constituted in 2005 is no longer operating within its terms of reference and therefore will cease to be recognised from the end of this financial year.

Recommendation(s):

None. This report is for information

1. Context and background

- 1.1 Formal participation between residents and the Council within Runnymede commenced in February 1999 with the formation of the Tenant's Services Group, who met prior to Housing and Community Services Committee to consider policy and management issues that impacted on Tenants and Leaseholders.
- 1.2 In February 2003 the Government issued its Sustainable Communities Plan. This Required all stock-holding Local Authorities to carry out a full options appraisal by 31 July 2005. As part of this process the Council established a Stock Options Form for tenants and leaseholders to work with the Tenant Participation Advisory Service to fully understand the implications of the process.
- 1.3 In May 2005 it was determined that the stock would be retained and following this to Tenants Services Group amalgamated with the Stock Options Forum to become the Runnymede Council Residents Association (RCRA).
- 1.4 A constitution was adopted by the Runnymede Council Residents Association on 21 June 2005 and from its inception, Mrs Jenny Hill was the Chair of this group, also representing Runnymede residents at the Association of Retained Council Housing (ARCH) and serving as Chair of its Tenants group for a period.
- 1.5 Within the RCRA Constitution there are requirements for representative membership and regular meetings:
 - The RCRA will meet up to 10 times a year and where applicable will meet shortly before the Housing and Community Services Committee. From time to time, it may be necessary to convene extra meetings. The local committees will meet 4 times a year and their meetings will precede the main committee meetings.
 - Membership of the Association will be restricted to no more than twenty one members. All 4 area committees will nominate up to 4 members to the main committee, and 5 spaces will be held for residents from more remote areas. Representation of all areas and estates must be reflected in the membership of RCRA.
 - A quorum of seven members will be required for a meeting.

2. **Report**

- 2.1 Although there have been some local tenant associations established since 2005, they have not been sustained and currently there is no active group within the borough. The RCRA has not met since 2019, there were a small number of active members predominantly from IRL but it had not been quorate for some time.
- 2.2 This reflects a national decrease in traditional tenant participation and it is acknowledged landlords must engage with their residents through a variety of channels. At the January meeting of this committee, Members were updated in the Tenant and Leaseholder Engagement Strategy showing there is more success in engaging with residents individually and digitally.
- 2.3 From April 2023 the RCRA will no longer be recognised by Runnymede Borough Council. The Council will now focus on building resident engagement with a wide, representative range of residents, on services, policies, contracts etc. In addition, the Council will be surveying residents to collect data on the 22 new Tenant Satisfaction Measures that the regulator now requires social landlords to collect.

3. **Policy framework implications**

- 3.1 The Runnymede Council Residents Association is no longer able to operate within its constitution as it does not have sufficient active members to be quorate or representative.

4. **Resource implications**

- 4.1 The Chair of the RCRA receives an allowance to attend Housing Committee to represent tenants' views. This will not be paid in 2023/24.

5. **Legal implications**

- 5.1 There are no legal implications associated with this report.

6. **Timetable for Implementation**

- 6.1 The Chair of the RCRA will not receive funding from Runnymede Borough Council's Housing Service for the next financial year, new budgets are in place for tenant engagement and inclusion.

7. **Conclusions**

This report is for information