

<b>MAYOR AND CABINET</b>			
<b>Report Title</b>	Changes to the Phoenix Community Housing Board		
<b>Key Decision</b>	Yes	Item No.	
<b>Ward</b>	Borough Wide		
<b>Contributors</b>	Executive Director for Customer Services Head of Law		
<b>Class</b>	Part 1	<b>Date:</b>	11 February 2015

## **1 Summary**

- 1.1 This report sets out for the Mayor proposals to amend the Board of Phoenix Community Housing (PCH), which have been developed in line the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) Regulatory Framework and the National Housing Federation Code of Governance, and recommends that the Mayor agrees that the Council should agree these changes, as is required by PCH's transfer agreement.

## **2 Recommendations**

The Mayor is recommended to:

- 2.1 Note the background to the proposed changes to the Board of Phoenix Community Housing, and the changes themselves, and
- 2.2 Agree the proposed changes set out in paragraph 5.

## **3 Policy Context**

- 3.1 The contents of this report are consistent with the Council's policy framework. It supports the achievements of the Sustainable Community Strategy policy objectives:

- Ambitious and achieving: where people are inspired and supported to fulfil their potential.
- Empowered and responsible: where people can be actively involved in their local area and contribute to tolerant, caring and supportive local communities.
- Healthy, active and enjoyable: where people can actively participate in maintaining and improving their health and well-being, supported by high quality health and care services, leisure, culture and recreational activities.

## **4 Background**

- 4.1 As a Housing Association, PCH is regulated by the Homes & Communities Agency which expects, as best practice, that all Housing Associations will follow guidelines set out in their Code of Governance.

- 4.2 Every year PCH completes a review of its governance arrangements, against its code of governance. Currently PCH does not meet best practice guidance set out by the National Housing Federation in the code around the size of its Board. As a result of this PCH proposes to make changes to the size and nature of its Board.
- 4.3 When PCH was created following a stock transfer from the Council in 2009, its constitution contained provisions that meant the Council was required to sanction any changes to its governance structures, including its Board.

## **5 Proposed changes**

- 5.1 The National Housing Federation code of good practice sets out that a Board should have at least five members and no more than 12, including co-optees. Previously the PCH Board consisted of 15 members and as such the PCH Board agreed at its AGM in the autumn of 2014 to adopt a new arrangement in keeping with the National Federation Guidance, subject to that arrangement being sanctioned by the Council.
- 5.2 The changes that are proposed are for the PCH Board to reduce in size from 15 to 12. Whilst the Board stood at 15 members the composition was seven residents, five independents and three Councillor members. Residents formed the largest group on the Board. This is important for Phoenix Community Housing, as they are a Community Gateway and residents are at the heart of their work. The proposed rule change, if formally adopted, would result in a 12 person Board with six residents, four independents and two councillor members.
- 5.3 The net effect, therefore, would be that there would be one fewer each of resident board members, independent board members and councillor board members.
- 5.4 This new structure is already partly operational because – in advance of the changes being formally ratified – two rather than three Councillor appointments to the board were made following the Council's AGM in 2014.
- 5.5 Given that the changes that PCH proposes to make to its board structure are in line with its regulatory framework and best practice in governance, the Mayor is recommended to formally ratify the proposed changes set out above.

## **6 Financial Implications**

- 6.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

## **7 Legal Implications**

- 7.1 The legal position is set out in the body of this report. There are no other specific legal implications arising out of this report

## **8 Crime and disorder implications**

- 8.1 There are no specific environmental implications arising out of this report.

## **9 Equalities Implications**

9.1 There are no specific equalities implications arising out of this report.

## **10 Environmental Implications**

10.1 There are no specific environmental implications arising out of this report.

## **11 Background documents and originator**

11.1 There are no background documents to this report.

11.2 If you would like any further information on this report please contact Jeff Endean, Housing Strategy and Programmes Team Manager at [jeff.endean@lewisham.gov.uk](mailto:jeff.endean@lewisham.gov.uk) or on 020 8314 6213.