

HOUSING MANAGEMENT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

Agenda Item 13

Brighton & Hove City Council

Subject: Consultation Draft of Resident Involvement Strategy
Date of Meeting: 14 June 2010
Report of: Director of Housing, Culture and Enterprise
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Wards Affected: All

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

- 1.1 This report provides a copy of the consultation draft of the Resident Involvement Strategy for council housing residents, as agreed with the Tenant Compact Monitoring Group (TCMG). Following member approval, a wider process of consultation will begin, throughout the City. Suggested changes and amendments will be considered before a final, proposed, document, will be presented to Housing Management Consultative Committee.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That the Committee endorses the process of consultation on the draft of the Resident Involvement Strategy, to commence, as outlined in the timetable in appendix 1.
- 2.2 Committee requests that, following the period of consultation; a revised document is presented to Housing Management Consultative Committee.

3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION/CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS:

- 3.1 The Council's Housing Service has developed a wide range of informal and form mechanisms to promote tenant and resident involvement, through a network of 69 active resident associations, representing their communities across the city. There has been considerable success in promoting different levels and styles of involvement, with recent initiatives including the development of the City Assembly, Chairman's focus groups, the Asset Management Panel, and resident Mystery Shoppers. The Housing Service now aims to focus upon the effectiveness and outcomes of involvement.

- 3.2 Through the development of an overarching Resident Involvement Strategy, the council now aims to build upon this success and focus upon the effectiveness and outcomes of involvement. .
- 3.3 In March, 2009, the Audit Commission's carried out an assessment of tenant and resident participation activities and made recommendation for improvement based upon good practice. The assessment included:
- Assessing how well formal tenant participation activities work, with a focus on role clarity and their overall contribution to service improvement, strategy development and decision-making (outcomes);
 - Looking at how effectively tenants and residents can get their views across.
 - Analysis of how current arrangements promote the engagement of, and reflect the views of, the wider tenant base, including more marginalised groups; and an assessment of the performance management arrangements for monitoring impact of tenant and resident involvement.
- 3.4 The feedback from the audit commission was very encouraging and included the follow strengths relating to our resident involvement activity:
- Resident involvement is well resourced and supported with residents consulted on a wide range of issues
 - Our three year Service Improvement Plan is built upon strong links to residents priorities
 - Relationships with tenants and councilors are mature and productive
 - We have committed staff who demonstrate a professional and caring approach towards customers consulted on a wide range of issues.

The audit commission also suggested areas where we could improve, which included:

- developing an overarching resident involvement strategy
- exploring ways of increasing the diversity of resident involvement as the profile of some tenant representative bodies does not reflect the profile of the community.

The development of the Resident Involvement Strategy aims to meet these recommendations.

- 3.5 The relationship between Members, tenants, leaseholders and officers has previously been set out in the document "*Tenant Participation Compact for Brighton & Hove, Partnership for Success*". This is a published document, available on the council web site. *Partnership for Success*, itself followed on from the first published compact in 2000. Although Brighton & Hove tenants and leaseholders were among the first in the country to engage in close, partnership, working in a participation relationship going back to the early 1980's

3.6 The Tenant Compact Monitoring Group have highlighted the need to reach out to those residents who are not actively involved in their local tenant and resident association. To support this, a Tenant and Leaseholder Involvement Survey was issued to all council housing residents. The survey was carried out in order to achieve the following:

- To gain an understanding of why some residents are not more actively involved in their local tenant and resident association
- To establish how those residents who do not want to be involved in their local association, for whatever reason, would still like to play a role in influencing the services they receive
- To establish the key issues or service areas that tenant and leaseholders would like to be involved in
- To develop a database of those residents and leaseholders who are interested in becoming involved, and the way in which they would like that you happen.

The results of the survey were presented to Housing Management Consultative Committee in May 2010.

3.7 The Tenant Compact Monitoring Group considered the results of this survey and held two workshops, for the TCMG members and deputies, on 24 February and 27 April this year. The result of their work is the attached draft of the new Resident Involvement Strategy (Appendix 2).

3.8 The advent of the Tenant Services Authority, as the national regulator for the sector, has given an added imperative to the review of the Compact and the writing of the new Strategy. The consultation draft of the Resident Involvement Strategy is designed to deliver a resident involvement framework that will meet the requirement of the 'Tenant Involvement and Empowerment' standard of the TSA's new regulatory framework for social housing.

3.9 Consultation draft of the Resident Involvement Strategy

3.9.1 The consultation draft of the Resident Involvement Strategy is attached as Appendix 2. The strategy sets out to build upon the existing resident participation system and seeks to present new opportunities for increasing the number of residents who get involved, whilst also encouraging those that don't normally engage with the council's housing service to do so

3.9.2 During the development of the consultation draft of the Resident Involvement Strategy we agreed with the Tenant Compact Monitoring Group, the following guiding principles that underpin everything we do when involving residents in the management of their housing:

- Every tenant and leaseholder matters and should be able to have a say in how their housing is managed
- We will offer residents support to be effectively engaged, involved and empowered
- We are committed to equal opportunities and social inclusion in how we deliver services, provide information and involve residents
- We will treat all residents with fairness and respect and encourage residents to do the same
- We are committed to openness and transparency with our residents in reaching decisions about our housing stock and providing information about our performance
- We will ensure we meet regulatory requirements on tenant involvement and empowerment and fully involve our tenants in co-regulating our housing management services

3.9.3 The draft strategy proposes the following objectives for delivering the Resident Involvement Strategy 2010 – 2015

Objective 1	Provide a wide range of opportunities for residents to be involved in their housing
Objective 2	Develop, a framework for agreeing local offers and priorities with our residents
Objective 3	Involve residents in the development of housing policy and the design and delivery of housing services
Objective 4	Involve residents in monitoring and scrutinising our performance in delivering housing services

Residents will be asked through the consultation process whether they agree with the guiding principles and core objective of the strategy and will be encouraged to suggest activity that will enable use to meet the core objectives.

4. CONSULTATION

- 4.1 The Tenant Compact Monitoring Group have now approved this document for broad and open consultation with all council housing residents. Subject to HMCC approval, those to be included, in this process, will be Members, all tenant and resident associations and other interested local groups through the Brighton & Hove Strategic Partnership and the Community Engagement Framework.
- 4.2 The document will be published on the council's website and press releases will accompany the consultation process.

- 4.3 It is anticipated that the results of the consultation will be available in a revised document to be brought back to the September 2010 Committee cycle, in accordance with the timetable attached as Appendix 1.

5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

- 5.1 Any costs arising from the consultation process will be met from existing resources within the 2010/11 Housing Revenue Account budget and reported as part of the Targeted Budget Management (TBM) process if necessary. Any financial implications arising from the revised Resident Involvement Strategy will be included as part of a separate report in September

*Finance Officer Consulted: Monica Brooks: Principal Accountant
Date: 19 May 2010*

Legal Implications:

- 5.2 Section 105 of the Housing Act 1985 imposes a duty on the Council to maintain appropriate arrangements for informing and involving residents in housing policy. A new Resident Involvement Strategy devised as a result of the consultation process outlined in the report will assist the Council in meeting that duty. It will also help in meeting the TSA's new "Tenant Involvement and Empowerment" standard. Failure to meet a standard is a ground for the TSA to exercise its extensive range of regulatory powers. It is not considered that any individual's Human Rights Act rights will be adversely affected by the report's recommendations.

Lawyer Consulted: Liz Woodley

Date: 1 June 2010

Equalities Implications:

- 5.3 The Tenant and Leaseholder Involvement Survey has provided an up to date and focussed basis on which to conduct consultation in a way that engages customers in an appropriate way to suit their individual needs. The survey will be a valuable resource in ensuring appropriate consideration is given where, previously, groups might have been under represented. An equalities impact assessment of the final strategy will be produced.

Sustainability Implications:

- 5.4 To assist with the Council's sustainability objectives resource neutral or reduced carbon methods of consultation will be used wherever possible. These will include web-based, internet and Email surveys as well as social media and networking sites

Crime & Disorder Implications:

- 5.5 It is recognised that anti-social behaviour remains a level of concern for residents and their representatives. It is anticipated that the final Resident Insolvent Strategy will confirm and develop the role of the recently established Anti-Social Behaviour Working Group.

Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

- 5.6 In any arrangement of engagement it is acknowledged that there will, at times, be conflicting views and the potential for individual rivalries, within or between groups of residents. Within the new strategy it will be important to maintain, as far as possible, that it is for residents themselves to resolve difficulties through their own, local, democratic arrangements. Where difficulties become particularly destructive that they risk the good working of the strategy, individuals will be encouraged to use the facilities of independent mediation services to resolve matters. The final Resident Involvement Strategy will take account of such issues.

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

- 5.7 The final Resident Involvement Strategy will be in line with the principles of the Corporate Engagement Framework and those preparing the final draft will consider the emerging views.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

1. Draft Resident Involvement Strategy 2010 - 2015

Documents In Members' Rooms

1. None

Background Documents

1. None