

Committee(s): Housing Committee	Date: 27 June 2022
Subject: Co-option of Tenants Representatives	Wards Affected: All
Report of: Tracey Lilley, Corporate Director – Housing & Community Safety	Public
Report Author/s: Name: Angela Abbott, Corporate Manager – Housing Needs & Delivery Telephone: 01277 312500 E-mail: angela.abbott@brentwood.gov.uk	For Decision

Summary

The report sets out proposals to co-opt representatives of Tenants Talkback into the Environment, Enforcement and Housing Committee for housing related items, in accordance with the Council constitution.

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to:

- R1. Approve that Tenant Talkback be invited to send two representatives to each meeting of the Housing Committee where public housing items are to be discussed.**
- R2. Approve that the representatives of Tenants Talkback be co-opted onto the committee for the duration of the consideration of these items, and have the right to speak, but not vote.**
- R3. Request that the Corporate Manager (Estates) arrange appropriate training of the representatives.**

Main Report

Introduction and Background

1. Members will be aware that Tenant Talkback is the group of Council Tenants and Leaseholders who meet regularly with Housing staff and Councillors to discuss various subjects that affect them. This is made up of Tenants and Leaseholders from different estates and areas in the Borough.
2. Tenant Talkback remains our main consultative panel, gaining feedback from Tenants and Leaseholders on all policies, procedures, and projects that the Housing department are working on. Group members are keen to continue their

work and would also like to recruit more members to Tenant Talkback and boost their profile.

3. The Compact includes the following paragraph:

Two representatives from the Talkback Group are invited to attend the Housing Committee in a non-voting role. They are able to speak on housing-related items at the Chair's discretion.

4. In the previous operation of the Housing Committee this arrangement operated on an informal basis.
5. The Council's updated Constitution was adopted at the Annual Council meeting on 15 May 2013 (Minute 11 refers) and further changes have been made subsequently.

Context

6. Following the adoption of the Council's new constitution, the previous informal operation of Tenant Talkback's right to speak at committee needs to be formalised.
7. The new constitution has anticipated such an arrangement in Part 4.1 of the Constitution (Council Procedure Rules) paragraph 25, which reads:

"Co-option

Generally, a committee, or a sub-committee may co-opt two persons onto the committee. Any persons so co-opted may speak but not vote."

8. In order to maintain the commitment of the Tenant Participation Compact, it is recommended that Tenant Talkback be invited to send two representatives to each meeting of the Housing Committee where public housing-related items are to be discussed. The representatives will be able to speak but not vote. It is recommended that their right to speak be on similar basis of other members of the committee.
9. Representatives will not be able to participate when the committee goes into a closed session.
10. It is important that Talkback Representatives receive a similar level of training to other committee members to ensure they are confident in the process of the operation of the committee.
11. It is anticipated that Tenant Talkback will send the same individuals to each meeting, which will be helpful to ensure consistent understanding of the Committee process. However, it is also acknowledged that substitute representatives may also need to be sent.

12. Consequently, it is recommended that the Housing Manager arrange appropriate training for a number of Tenant Talkback representatives to ensure both the regular delegates and any substitutes have had the benefit of appropriate training.

Reasons for Recommendation

13. To ensure that the Housing Department provides effective and transparent representation of local people's views.

Consultation

14. Consultations have taken place with Tenant Talkback who agreed with the report. However, members consider that representatives should have the right to speak at the Committee and sent a copy of the agenda prior to the meeting

References to Corporate Plan

15. Drive continuous improvement of our housing services and continue a service improvement programme to ensure our services are delivered efficiently.

Implications

Financial Implications

Name/Title: Phoebe Barnes – Corporate Manager Finance (Deputy S151)

Tel/Email: 01277 312500/phoebe.barnes@brentwood.gov.uk

16. There are no financial implications of the recommendations.

Legal Implications

Name & Title: Amanda Julian, Corporate Director (Law & Governance) and Monitoring Officer

Tel & Email: 01277 312500/amanda.julian@brentwood.gov.uk

17. There are no direct legal implications.

Economic Implications

Name/Title: Phil Drane, Corporate Director (Planning and Economy)

Tel/Email: 01277 312500/philip.drane@brentwood.gov.uk

18. There are no direct economic implications.

Equality and Diversity Implications

Name/Title: Kim Anderson, Corporate Manager (Communities, Leisure & Health)

Tel/Email: 01277 312500/kim.anderson@brentwood.gov.uk

19. The Public Sector Equality Duty applies to the Council when it makes decisions. The duty requires us to have regard to the need to:

- a) Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other behaviour prohibited by the Act. In summary, the Act makes discrimination etc. on the grounds of a protected characteristic unlawful
 - b) Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
 - c) Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not, including tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.
20. The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, gender, and sexual orientation. The Act states that 'marriage and civil partnership' is not a relevant protected characteristic for (b) or (c) although it is relevant for (a).
21. The proposals in this report will not have a disproportionate adverse impact on any people with a particular characteristic.
22. The recommendations support effective representation of local people's views, which in turn supports equality of housing opportunities and life chances.

Other Implications (where significant) – i.e., Health and Safety, Asset Management, Risk Management, Section 17 – Crime & Disorder, Sustainability, ICT.

None

Background Papers

- None

Appendices to this report

- None