

15th June 2016

Environment and Housing Management Committee

Co-option of Tenants Representatives

Report of: *Helen Gregory, Head of Housing and Benefit Services*

Wards Affected: *All wards*

This report is: *Public*

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 The report sets out proposals to co-opt representatives of Tenants Talkback into the Environment & Housing Management Committee for housing related items, in accordance with the Council constitution and with the previously approved Tenant Participation Compact.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 **Tenant Talkback be invited to send two representatives to each meeting of the Environment and Housing Management Committee where housing items are to be discussed.**
- 2.2 **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.**
- 2.3 **The Head of Housing and Benefit Services be requested to arrange appropriate training of the representatives.**

3. Introduction and Background

- 3.1 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. Each residents association representing Council tenants or leaseholders is invited to send two representatives along to the Tenants Talkback Group.

- 3.2 The role of tenant participation in general, and Tenant Talkback's place in it, has been greatly developed over the last few years. The former Housing and Health Committee on 9th July 2014 (Minute 65) resolved that a revised Tenant Participation Compact and Constitution for Tenant Talkback be approved to promote and develop ongoing tenant involvement and participation.
- 3.3 The Housing department have recently embarked on a review of the current Tenant Talkback structure to ensure we are working in the most effective manner. We have commissioned TPAS- Tenant Engagement Experts (<http://www.tpas.org.uk>) to provide us with an independent review. This review will include any relevant changes to the Tenant Participation Compact and respective constitutions. The results of the review will be provided at a future committee.
- 3.4 The Compact includes the following paragraph:
- Two representatives from the Talkback Group are invited to attend the Environment and Housing Management Committee in a non voting role. They are able to speak on housing related items at the Chair's discretion.*
- 3.5 In the previous operation of the Housing and Health Committee this arrangement operated on an informal basis.
- 3.6 The Council's updated Constitution was adopted at the Annual Council meeting on 15th May 2013 (Minute 11 refers) and further changes have been made subsequently.

4. Context

- 4.1 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.
- 4.2 The new constitution has anticipated such an arrangement in Part 4.1 of the Constitution (Council Procedure Rules) paragraph 25, which reads:
- 25. 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.
- 4.3 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 Environment and Housing Management Committee which 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.

- 4.4 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.
- 4.5 It is anticipated that generally Tenant Talkback will send the same individuals to each meeting, which will be helpful to ensure consistency of understanding of the Committee process. However, it is also acknowledged that substitute representatives may also need to be sent.
- 4.6 Consequently, it is recommended that the Head of Housing and Benefit Services 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.

5. Reference to the Corporate Plan

- 5.1 This supports the Council's priorities for Housing Health and Wellbeing and A Prosperous Borough, and is consistent with the priorities of Housing Health and Wellbeing to provide effective representation of local people's views.

6. Implications

Financial Implications

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- 6.1 There are no financial implications of the recommendations.

Legal Implications

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- 6.2 The legal basis for the recommendations and related legal implications are as set out in the body of this report.

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

- 6.3 Equality and diversity implications: The recommendations support effective representation of local people’s views, which in turn supports equality of housing opportunities and life chances.

7. Background Papers

- 7.1 None

8. Appendices to this report

- 8.1 None

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