

Lead Officer: Executive director of adult services, health and housing

Wards: All

Agenda Item: 12

Subject: - Your Housing, Your Questions

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.1 The Panel is asked to agree to the proposed changes to the format of the Your Housing, Your Questions resident engagement events and to organise two pilot events in the new format during the coming summer.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 This report details a proposal to introduce quarterly events, open to all residents, where they will receive information or be consulted on a range of housing services provided by the council. It will also provide an opportunity for residents to ask questions about those service areas.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The council is keen to introduce a wide range of options for tenants to engage with the council. The idea of the Your Housing, Your Questions (YHYQ) sessions was introduced to address the gap left following the review of the Community Housing Panels (CHPs). Their main purpose was to provide an opportunity for any tenant to attend an event when they could put housing questions to those who are responsible for making decisions in relation to the housing service.
- 3.2 The outcome of the two pilot YHYQ events was reported to this Panel in February 2013. Although both events were generally well received by those who attended there was concern that many of the questions asked were of a personal nature and the panel were unable to provide answers to these on the day and that they may be of little or no interest to others in attendance. This Panel agreed that an alternative format needed to be explored.
- 3.3 The council has also been concerned that the annual tenant conference is no longer delivering value for money as attendance has been falling. As a consequence alternative options have been considered to meet the need provide tenants with information and seek tenants views on proposed new policies and procedures.

- 3.4 The proposal seeks to address both of the above issues and suggests an alternative which combine the benefits of YHYQ, CHPs and the tenant conference into an alternative event that is delivered at regular intervals throughout the year.

4. DETAIL

- 4.1 It is proposed that a newly formatted Your Housing, Your Question event is delivered 4 times a year. The suggested format is as follows:

- Event opens with one hour surgery where residents can discuss their personal housing issues with officers from all housing service areas on a one to one basis.
- In advance tenants agree two key topics for presentation by a service manager followed by a Q & A.
- The event will end with a final general Q & A session.

A outline programme could then look like this:

6.00pm Surgery
7.00pm Welfare Reform Changes (presentation)
7.15pm Q & A
7.35pm ASB (presentation)
7.50pm Q & A
8.10pm General Q & A (no personal issues)
8.25pm Topics for future events
8.30pm Close.

- 4.2 The events would be open to all residents in the borough and would be advertised widely in advance and include details of the topics to be discussed. They would be chaired by a tenant and a small tenant steering group would be established to co-ordinate and plan each event as agree the topics to be discussed.
- 4.3 It is proposed that these events will be held 4 times a year and held at various venues throughout the borough and that the YHYQ branding be retained.
- 4.4 A residents' steering group will be established to plan and deliver the two pilot events in June and September and the outcome of these two events will be reported back to this Panel in October.

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