

**TENANT AND LEASEHOLDER PANEL**  
**3 July 2018**

**Lead Officer:** Stephen Tate, Director of district centres and regeneration

**Wards:** All

**Agenda Item:**

**Subject: - Review of the Tenant & Leaseholder Panel & Refresh of Resident Involvement Framework**

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**1. Recommendations**

- 1.1 The Panel is asked to note the contents of this report and support the recommendations to:
- a) Amend the membership criteria of the Tenant & Leaseholder Panel & relaunch the panel at the next meeting on 16 October 2018
  - b) Review the existing resident involvement framework together with residents
  - c) Note the recruitment programme to increase the number and diversity of involved residents
  - d) Note the changes to the structure of the resident involvement team

**2. Summary**

- 2.1 This report proposes changes to the membership criteria of the Tenant & Leaseholder Panel with the aim of increasing the opportunity for residents to influence housing policies and strategies. It also recommends a review of the existing involvement framework with the aim of increasing the engagement of residents in the management of their homes and neighbourhoods and the increasing feedback from residents on their satisfaction and priorities in relation to housing services.
- 2.2 The report also sets out the structure of the resident involvement team so that it can best meet its changing role and the way the way the housing service is engaging with its residents

**3. Background**

- 3.1 At the October 2017 meeting of the Tenant & Leaseholder Panel (TLP) on a report was received proposing changes to the operation of the panel. This included a review of the membership criteria of the panel and a working group was established to work with officers. The group met on two occasions in November and agreed on a number of proposals.
- 3.2 During these discussions it became clear that a wider review of the involvement framework was required to ensure that the council is engaging

with residents effectively, increasing the numbers of those involved and making better use of digital technology.

#### **4. Refresh of the Resident Involvement Framework**

- 4.1 Each year we produce an annual performance report and impact assessment covering the year's resident involvement activities. These reports enable the council and residents (through the Resident Involvement Group - RIG) to consider the cost and outcomes of all engagement activities and make decisions regarding the continuation or revision of the activity.
- 4.2 There are a number of factors that mean that a more fundamental review the framework should now take place. These include:
- national trends in resident involvement best practice
  - recommendations from the Hackitt Review
  - the impending government housing white paper
  - the recently elected labour administration's manifesto commitments for the coming four years in relation to listening to and working with residents and communities
  - the success of different approaches to resident involvement tested over the last year including localised face to face engagement in relation to fire safety after the Grenfell tragedy and resident involvement in the planning and implementation of the sprinkler programme
- 4.3 Last year, the council hosted a learning exchange for resident involvement officers from across London and the South East to discuss the future of resident involvement and has researched current good practice. In September 2017 Croydon resident representatives attended a workshop facilitated by Phil Morgan, one of the country's leading authorities on resident engagement. This session mainly focussed on the role of the TLP but raised wider concerns about Croydon's involvement framework.
- 4.4 Following the tragic fire at Grenfell Tower a review was conducted by Dame Hackitt and her report was published earlier this year. The report contains a number of recommendations in relation to resident involvement. These include the need for residents to be actively involved in the ongoing safety of buildings and have access to risk assessments and other safety information. With this in mind the council is proposing to establish a residents' fire safety panel. Details will be worked up with residents over the summer.
- 4.5 The Government will be publishing a Housing White Paper later this year which is likely to include proposals to ensure that all social landlords have effective mechanisms in place which enable tenants to make their views known and that these are listened to and acted upon.
- 4.5 The council's current involvement framework is set out in appendix A. Although it provides residents a range of options to engage with the council there are a number of issues that need to be addressed. These can be

summarised as follows:

- The number and diversity of residents who are getting involved is reducing and as a result are not always representative of the wider community – however we engaged with a much wider range of residents when we visited their neighbourhoods and homes after Grenfell.
- The current framework has a strong focus on panels and meetings. Many residents do not want to or are unable to attend meetings and in addition most usually require an ongoing commitment from residents. A number of our panels and groups have a similar membership and this membership does not fully reflect the diversity of all our residents.
- Residents have busy lives and housing issues may not be a high priority so may not be willing or able to commit a lot of time to get involved. Residents are more likely to share their views or concerns when we go to their neighbourhoods and homes.
- We do not offer a wide range of options for residents to engage digitally. Many working age and younger people would prefer or expect to receive and send information digitally (this encompasses SMS, email, web and social media)
- Some engagement activities do not result in clear outcomes. With reducing resources across the council and within the HRA, it is important that officer time is focused on those activities that make a clear difference to the experience of residents.
- The framework is currently very focused on face to face engagement activities but should also explicitly include the use of data and insight the council gathers and holds to ensure that a wide evidence base of resident viewpoints and data (for example in relation to customer satisfaction, demographics or social need) is considered when making recommendations for improvements or changes to services or evaluating the impact of resident involvement activities.

## **5. The Future of the Tenant & Leaseholder Panel**

- 5.1 The resident working group has already reviewed the role of the TLP. The group made it clear that they value the role of the panel, however, a number of recommendations were made in a bid to make meetings more effective and ensure that residents are more able to influence housing policy and strategy at the earliest opportunity. The recommendations include the following:
- 5.2 It is proposed that at the end of this meeting that all existing panel members will be required to stand down and the panel relaunched.
- 5.3 A revised membership criteria is set out in the document (Appendix B) and all existing members are invited to reapply for membership if they feel that they meet the membership criteria and can contribute to the work of the panel. All applicants will be required to complete a self-assessment form (Appendix C). If the applicant can demonstrate on this form that they meet the membership criteria they will be invited for an informal interview with a panel consisting of

two resident representatives (who are not members of the TLP) and a council officer.

- 5.4 The expectation is that using a selection process will ensure that residents who sit on the panel do so to represent their wider community and/or to bring a relevant professional knowledge or experience to the panel. The selection process should ensure that residents' personal interests or skills are applied to the most appropriate group or activity.
- 5.5 All successful applicants will be required to attend an induction session which will include information about how the council and housing services work and their role as panel members.
- 5.6 Over the next three months there will be a wide ranging recruitment exercise with the aim of forming a panel membership that is more reflective of those who are living in council owned homes. The aim is to recruit a panel of 'expert' residents to work in partnership with the council.
- 5.7 The revised panel with its new membership will be launched at the meeting scheduled for 9 October 2018. Elections will take place at this meeting for a Chair and Vice-Chair.
- 5.8 It was recognised that not all residents are able to commit to or able to attend regular panel meetings and in such circumstances residents can apply for associate membership. Associate members will be sent agenda papers electronically and are able to comment on these before the meeting. All comments raised by associate members will be considered at the meeting. Associate members will also receive the minutes of meetings electronically.
- 5.9 It is also proposed that meetings are web cast so that residents can view meetings on their laptops or tablets. In addition we will explore options to enable residents to interact with the meetings through Skype or other social media.
- 5.10 Induction sessions and ongoing training will be offered to all panel members. There will be resident led reporting from other panels (e.g. scrutiny), focus, mystery shoppers and task & finish groups.
- 5.11 Forward planning for the year's meetings will take place to ensure both panel members and officers early notice of all upcoming strategic issues which will be discussed by the panel.
- 5.12 There are also immediate actions the council will take to address some of the concerns raised by panel members. This will include the following:
  - Report forms to be issued at all meetings to enable panel members to report personal housing issues and not raise them during the meeting
  - The resident involvement activity report (included on all panel agendas) to include more detailed information on the issues being discussed at the service improvement groups.

- Future minutes to include an action plan detailing the action, responsible officer and completion date.

## 6. Actions

6.1 During the coming months we will be conducting reviews and developing a number of initiatives to address the issues in 4.5. The council will work with residents including RIG, task & finish groups and focus groups to work up and agree the detailed proposals. These will be presented at the next TLP meeting on 9 October 2018.

6.2 The tasks include the following:

6.2.1 **Review of Service Improvement Groups** – To take place during the summer. Currently these groups are organised by operational service. This creates a silo'd way of engaging with residents and makes it more difficult to focus on areas of improvement that involve a number of service areas. Whilst some services lend themselves to a regular forum (ie leaseholders), this is less true for others. We have been trialling new approaches through the Capital investment service improvement group including site visits to monitor and report back on the resident experience of major works and task & finish activities focusing on specific improvements – in this case, we are engaging with residents to review and rewrite where needed standard letters that are sent when major works are due to be carried out. The intention is to ensure that information provided is easy to understand and the impact of this will be assessed in terms of resident satisfaction and service demand.

6.2.2 **Recruitment Drive** – commenced in June. Includes a road show, direct emails and phone calls, newsletter, web site, direct mailing with rent & service charge statement, Open evening (27 June), production of video, rebranding of publicity materials and training for new representatives. The road show will include a short survey asking residents how they would prefer to receive information from the housing service and how they want to make their views heard.

6.2.3 **Face to face engagement** - Increase local surgeries/pop ups/local surveys/supporting the development of community groups and residents' associations

6.2.4 **Major works consultation** - Review the way we engage with tenants & leaseholders affected by major works to their homes and neighbourhoods – including engagement techniques, standard letters, resident feedback – Commenced April

6.2.5 **Resident feedback** – An audit of how we obtain and use resident feedback to improve services is currently taking place – Acuity appointed to conduct the audit and report is due in July.

6.2.6 **Communications** – A review of the way we communicate with residents. This

will include existing newsletters and increasing the use of social media and on-line options, alongside more localised face to face engagement

- 6.2.7 **Branding** – All communications and publicity have now been rebranded to support the refresh and attract a wider community. A strap line of ‘Love where you live’ will be used. See appendix D for examples.

## **7. Restructure of Resident Involvement Team**

- 7.1 The resident involvement team now incorporates the major works consultation team and is an engagement hub for the District Centres & Regeneration Directorate and Adult Social Care. To ensure the team is able to deliver a refreshed resident involvement framework as detailed above and its expanded function, the team has been restructured. Full recruitment to be completed by August. The new team structure is attached as appendix E

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