

Cabinet

Date of meeting: 6 June 2016

Report title: Resident Involvement in Housing Scrutiny Commission: Response and Action Plan

Wards: All

Report Authorised by: Strategic Director Neighbourhoods and Growth: Sue Foster

Portfolio: Cabinet Member for Housing: Councillor Matthew Bennett

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Report summary

The Resident Involvement in Housing Scrutiny Commission (the Commission) was set up in April 2015 to establish the best way for residents to be involved in the governance, scrutiny and delivery of housing-related works and services, in order to drive up satisfaction and improvement.

The Cabinet is requested to consider the Commission's report and approve the action plan setting out the response to the Commission's recommendations.

Recommendations

- (1) To receive the report and recommendations of the Resident Involvement in Housing Scrutiny Commission (Appendix 1).
- (2) To approve the action plan prepared in response to the Commission's recommendations (Appendix 2).

1. Context

- 1.1 The Resident Involvement in Housing Scrutiny Commission (the Commission) met between April and October 2015, activities included hosting seminars with invited experts to look at aspects of good practice in resident involvement in housing management and regeneration. The Commission's report with recommendations is attached as Appendix One.
- 1.2 The Commission presented its findings to Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 23 March 2016 and now submits its report to Cabinet for consideration.
- 1.3 This report and the attached action plan (Appendix 2) responds to the Commission's findings and sets out how the recommendations will be taken forward.

2. Proposal and Reasons

- 2.1 The Commission presented a wide range of recommendations covering all aspects of resident involvement in housing. There has been ongoing liaison between the Commission, the Cabinet Member for Housing and senior officers throughout the process to ensure joined up working.
- 2.2 In response an action plan has been developed that outlines the appropriate responses from the Council. Many of the actions set out link closely to the key housing management priority of improving engagement and involvement agreed by Cabinet in November 2015. Since that time the "new ways of engagement" work has progressed and taken account of the emerging findings from the Commission, through discussions with Tenants and Leaseholder Council groups, Area Forums and a consultative survey of all tenants and leaseholders on the proposed new arrangements. It is anticipated that these arrangements will be finalised over the next few months. Key actions such as providing accredited training for residents are already underway.

Similarly in terms of actions relating to engagement on estate regeneration schemes, most of the recommendations are already being implemented or are being developed to take account of the Commission's recommendations and make sure that as many residents as possible are engaged in developing proposals for their estates.

- 2.3 Following agreement of the action plan at Cabinet, an update will be provided after 12 months detailing progress made in relation to the recommendations. It is recommended it is 12 months as most of key recommendations in train and there will be no significant updates after 6 months.

3. Finance

- 3.1 The scrutiny action plan as drafted does not allow for a full quantification of financial implications as many of the resource requirements are not yet fully determined. Any resource requirements will need to be met from existing HRA budgets.

4 Legal and Democracy

- 4.1 Once a policy has been published there will be an expectation that it should be followed, unless there are clear and documented reasons to depart. Therefore for example in

recommendation 33 where it states “Related training should be mandatory for those involved in residents engagement panels in each stage of the process”, a Freedom Of Information Act or a EIR request could reveal what training the individuals received, and failure of officers to undertake such training could give rise to a Judicial Review. Otherwise, there would need to be a good documented reason why the policy has not been followed.

- 4.2 This proposed key decision was entered in the Forward Plan on 21 December 2015 and the necessary 28 clear days’ notice has been given. In addition, the Council’s Constitution requires the report to be published on the website for five clear days before the proposed decision is approved by the Cabinet Member. Any representations received during this period must be considered by the decision-maker before the decision is taken. A further period of five clear days - the call-in period – must then elapse before the decision is enacted. If the decision is called-in during this period, it cannot be enacted until the call-in has been considered and resolved.

5. Consultation and co-production

- 5.1 In the course of conducting its work the Commission undertook a number of exercises to solicit the views of Members, residents and relevant experts. Further details and the findings of that work are detailed within the body of the Commission’s report.

6. Risk management

- 6.1 There are risks if resident engagement is not carried out in accordance with the Council’s policy outlined in the Tenants Compact. The action plans help mitigate the risk.

7. Equalities impact assessment

- 7.1 No equalities impact assessment is needed specifically for this report. The Commission’s proposals and the action plan do seek to achieve a positive impact with respect to equalities, including opening up involvement processes and mechanisms to a wider range of people who are more broadly representative of the Borough’s residents. Individual estate regeneration reports are having EIAs completed as part of the process.

8 Community safety

- 8.1 None.

9 Organisational implications

- 9.1 None.

10 Timetable for implementation

23 March 2016	Final commission report approved by Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
6 June 2016	Commission report to be presented to Cabinet alongside action plan responding to the recommendations.
June 2017	Twelve month update report on progress against recommendations.

Audit trail				
Consultation				
Name/Position	Lambeth division	Date sent	Date received	Comments in para
Sue Foster Strategic Director	Neighbourhoods and Growth		26/5/16	
Rachel Sharpe Director	Strategy, Regeneration & Communities	11/4/16	4/5/16	throughout
Finance Daniel Grantham		11/4/16	23/5/16	3
Legal Services Greg Carson		11/4/16	18/4/16	4
Democratic Services	Corporate Affairs	26/05/16	26/05/16	
Councillor Matthew Bennett	Cabinet Member for Housing	14/4/16	26/5/16	
Informal Cabinet		26/5/16	26/5/16	

Report history	
Original discussion with Cabinet member	14 April 2016
Report deadline	26 April 2016
Date final report sent	26 April 2016
Report no.	248/16-17
Part II exempt from disclosure?	No
Key decision report	Yes
Date first appeared on forward plan	21 December 2015
Background information	Overview and Scrutiny Committee report, Resident Involvement in Housing Scrutiny Commission, 23 March 2016.
Appendices	Appendix 1: Resident Involvement in Housing Scrutiny Commission Report. Appendix 2: Resident Involvement in Housing Scrutiny Commission Action Plan.