

# Resident Involvement in Housing Scrutiny Commission Report

March 2016

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## **Foreword by the Co-Chairs of the Commission**

Housing is a key issue nationally and locally. This Scrutiny Commission was initiated at a time of opportunity for Lambeth; the local authority housing stock was brought under the direct control of the Council in 2015 from Lambeth Living (an 'arm's-length' company), and the implementation of the 2014 manifesto commitment to build an extra 1,000 council houses had begun.

It was therefore important to review the borough-wide involvement in decision making by Lambeth housing residents. The desire to bring a more robust resident involvement in the regeneration strategy was triggered by the experience of the Myatt's Field North Regeneration project. There was recognition that stronger participatory methods would have empowered local residents to contribute effectively to the delivery of building works and housing services. These matters directly affected the welfare of households and individuals.

Establishing the principles and mechanisms to ensure that stronger participatory methods could take place was a key driver for this Scrutiny Commission. The first part of the Commission's report on empowering residents to participate establishes the principles that council officers should follow while engaging with residents. These include placing residents at the centre of the service, improving satisfaction and value for money, smarter working including improving the use of data, striving for excellence, organisational culture and ethos, and establishing the mechanisms necessary for delivery. The second part develops these principles in the context of the regeneration processes needed to improve Lambeth's stock, and build homes to address the housing crisis.

The co-chairs are extremely grateful to those who gave their time generously in giving evidence (cited in appendix 1) as well as the commission's members who digested that evidence, read widely and developed these recommendations (cited on the cover sheet of the report).

Particular thanks is given to Gary O'Key, the Lead Scrutiny Officer who went beyond the 'call of duty' to keep the commission organised, with relevant papers and timely meetings.

*Mary Atkins, Councillor, Tulse Hill, Commission Co-Chair*

*Jacqui Dyer, Councillor, Vassall, Commission Co-Chair & Vice Chair of Overview and Scrutiny*

## List of Recommendations

These recommendations are for Lambeth Housing Management; however, they are also being reported to Registered Providers in the expectation that everyone with a responsibility for managing social housing stock in the borough will follow the best practice set out therein.

### *Principles*

#### **Recommendation 1**

The following principles should be followed by council officers when involving residents in any aspect of housing services:

- *Co-operative co-regulation.* Co-regulation is defined by the Chartered Institute of Housing as “*an approach where housing organisations’ frameworks for directing, accounting for, monitoring, assessing and modifying their own behaviour and performance are based on residents’ priorities, views, and engagement with relevant processes*”. Elected Councillors are also bound by these principles. This means officers should be monitoring all their decisions and behaviours from a resident’s perspective (i.e. how residents experience each interaction with an officer either in person or in writing)
- *Empowering residents through co-production.* Co-production is when an organisation (in this case the Council) works with a wide range of people on an issue without starting with a fixed outcome.
- *Recognising that there is no “one size fits all” solution* and thus it is important to have a range of structures and mechanisms – both fixed and flexible – to facilitate resident involvement.
- *Rigorous use of data, intelligence and insight* to inform improvement, engagement and involvement.
- *Value for money* – resident involvement has been shown not only to drive up satisfaction but also to lead to budget savings.

### ***Placing Residents at the Centre of the Service***

This should be done by:

#### **Recommendation 2**

Providing training and skills development opportunities for residents (e.g. training in chairing meetings, confidence building, taking part in committees, and managing budgets).

#### **Recommendation 3**

Involving residents in housing services development. This will include policy development, decision-making and the scrutiny of performance. This will use skills people have and develop new skills (e.g. in contract management, procurement panels for contractors and sub-contractors, complaints processes including the review of Council decisions).

#### **Recommendation 4**

Training should offer recognised accreditation/qualifications with progression routes.

#### **Recommendation 5**

Training should be done cooperatively (i.e. jointly with officers if appropriate) to develop shared understanding of issues and solutions. This should include training on the internal workings, structure and processes of the Council to raise awareness among residents.

**Recommendation 6**

A range of recruitment incentives to encourage participation should be developed. These should be produced with tenants and leaseholders, and monitored and reviewed regularly.

**Recommendation 7**

A strategy should be developed for involving residents not named on the rent book, residents on estates that are privately renting and those renting through social landlords. The above should include young adults.

**Recommendation 8**

Budgets should be identified for recommendations 2-7.

**Recommendation 9**

Delegated budgets should be available to local or area resident groups to manage

***Improving Satisfaction and Value for Money*****Recommendation 10**

Training should be run jointly (with housing officers/ housing associations and/or other groups as appropriate).

**Recommendation 11**

All key performance indicators (KPIs) used to measure the performance of housing services should be benchmarked locally and/or nationally.

**Recommendation 12**

Residents should be involved in developing local KPIs.

**Recommendation 13**

All KPIs should be presented in a range of formats (i.e. written/visual/graphical), to be developed by a cooperative working group in order to ensure they are accessible and user-friendly.

***Smarter Working: Improving Use of Data, Intelligence and Insight*****Recommendation 14**

Systems used to collect and store data should include other publicly-available information such as data on unemployment and income levels.

**Recommendation 15**

Data should be used to inform decision making.

**Recommendation 16**

Estate walkabouts led by officers should take place regularly. Processes and mechanisms (such as varied dates and times of walkabouts) should be agreed with residents and clear action points produced and dealt with.

**Recommendation 17**

The use of social media should be increased.

**Recommendation 18**

A contact database of residents should be established using an "opt in" system such as My Lambeth.

## ***Striving for Excellence***

### **Recommendation 19**

Lambeth Housing Management (LHM) performance data should be reported alongside local and national data (i.e. benchmarked).

### **Recommendation 20**

LHM should continue to exceed the housing consumer standards and, in the longer term, aim to achieve the Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS) Resident Involvement Accreditation for Landlords. ([http://www.tpas.org.uk/landlord\\_accreditation](http://www.tpas.org.uk/landlord_accreditation))

### **Recommendation 21**

A clear set of standards, providing systematic review of LHM's approach to involvement should be published.

### **Recommendation 22**

Standards should be externally reviewed, for example by TPAS.

## ***Organisational Culture and Ethos***

### **Recommendation 23**

Lambeth Housing staff and contractors should be trained and assessed on positive behaviours such as 'supporting learning and development' (level 3) and 'thinking strategically and creating clarity' (levels 1-4).

(<https://www.lambeth.gov.uk/sites/default/files/ec-lambeth-behaviours-cooperative-council.pdf> )

### **Recommendation 24**

Basic business practices should be adhered to such as voice mails being responded to, full mail boxes being emptied and calls returned.

### **Recommendation 25**

Residents' suggestions should be recorded to provide baselines for monitoring and enable progress to be demonstrated.

### **Recommendation 26**

Joined up working should be encouraged at all levels. This should involve LHM working closely with other areas of the council as well as other housing providers, community/voluntary groups and partners such as the borough police, to ensure residents receive as coherent, consistent and cost effective a service as possible; for example, effectively developing a shared strategic vision and response to anti-social behaviour.

### **Recommendation 27**

LHM should follow all relevant recommendations contained within the July 2015 Community Engagement Cabinet Review conducted by the Deputy Cabinet Member for Community Engagement and Customer Access (and the associated toolkit).

(<http://www.lambeth.gov.uk/elections-and-council/about-lambeth/lambeths-community-engagement-toolkit-2015> )

## ***Mechanisms and Structures***

### **Recommendation 28**

There should be a variety of involvement structures, both fixed and flexible, to accommodate the skills, needs and appetite of a wide range of residents. These could be existing or new and might include:

- The “Lambeth 500+” scheme that seeks to identify residents willing to get involved for short-term and long-term problem solving should be monitored and reviewed to make sure it is representative of all residents
- Tenants’ and Residents’ Associations (TRAs): these should be supported and promoted
- TRAs should be extended to street properties and small estates (either connected virtually or linked in with other local TRAs)
- Area structures, which would have devolved powers in terms of agenda setting and possibly budgets/grants. It would be beneficial for these groups to have links with existing structures to ensure good use of resources (for example, the five-neighbourhood structure where each neighbourhood has a lead councillor who acts as a coordinator)
- Borough-wide mechanisms for communication to be considered and co-produced if necessary
- Councillors and independent co-optees with expertise should be on scrutiny panels if required.

A range of structures should be considered including borough-wide or area-based, and/or linked with other strategic bodies. All structures should be democratic.

### **Recommendation 29**

Links should be developed with residents in housing associations for the purpose of sharing good practice and training (i.e. widening of the TRA network, scrutiny training).

### **Recommendation 30**

The commission envisages levels of involvement as follows:

- Level 0: communication and access to information in a regular and accessible form
- Level 1: involvement at a local level (e.g. in a TRA), including becoming a chair or treasurer, or participation in a local working group
- Level 2: involvement in a time-limited task and finish group looking at a specific issue (e.g. selection of contractors, repairs, complaints, and procurement processes). These may be borough-wide or area-based and should co-produce outcomes that are then responded to by relevant housing managers and/or Councillors
- Level 3: involvement in scrutiny, policy reviews and performance management, borough-wide and/or area-based.

## **Estate Regeneration**

### *Placing residents at the centre of the service*

#### **Recommendation 31**

Placing residents at the centre of the regeneration process should be the focus at all stages including consultation, design, building and contract management.

#### **Recommendation 32**

Before starting a regeneration process officers and members should research and review the history and decision-making related to the area concerned, including neighbourhood plans, and visit if necessary. This research should include reviewing lessons learned from previous projects in order that relevant learning can be applied.

#### **Recommendation 33**

Roles and responsibilities of officers, councillors and residents should be clear from the beginning. Related training should be mandatory for those involved in resident engagement panels in each stage of the process.

#### **Recommendation 34**

Focus groups/resident engagement panels should reflect the tenure split on the estate to allow differences to be discussed between different groups of tenants, leaseholders and freeholders.

#### **Recommendation 35**

Independent advisors should be appointed to resident engagement panels and be available for groups.

#### **Recommendation 36**

Those running meetings should be trained and skilled in all areas of chairing, including recognising and handling conflict.

#### **Recommendation 37**

Robust knowledge management processes should be put in place. This should include mechanisms for sharing experiences across estates and debriefs at the end of each stage of the regeneration involving officers, residents and other key stakeholders.

#### **Recommendation 38**

The recommendations of the London Assembly Housing Committee report "Knock It Down or Do It Up: The Challenge of Estate Regeneration" should be followed, particularly the first two recommendations on effective decision making processes (these are included as recommendations 39 and 40 below).

### *Effective Decision Making Processes*

#### **Recommendation 39**

The Council should be robust by being clear from the outset on the purpose of the proposed regeneration and how it fits within a broader strategy for the local area and borough, communicating this early, openly and broadly, and ensuring a systematic and objective option appraisal is undertaken and published.

**Recommendation 40**

The Council should include in its option appraisal effective consideration of medium- to long-term social and environmental issues. This would incorporate an assessment of the lifecycle carbon impacts of options and feature existing residents' needs and wishes in terms of their lived experience, in tandem with the wider strategic and financial imperatives. It would be clear how residents' views have been taken into account.

**Recommendation 41**

The Council should have fully justified any regeneration proposal. An independent test of opinion of estate residents should be undertaken which would help inform any final proposals.

**Recommendation 42**

The Council should ensure that homeowners are treated fairly and enable them to access an independent valuer to facilitate fair recompense for their properties. The starting point should be that homeowners are offered a like-for-like replacement of their property, or a similar offer, wherever possible.

**Recommendation 43**

Clear timetables need to be given, with reasons for any slippage.

*Communications***Recommendation 44**

A communication plan devised and delivered by professionals in the field should be developed for all phases of the regeneration process. This should be agreed with the resident engagement panel at the outset and reviewed regularly.

**Recommendation 45**

Communication should be two-way between the Council and residents and enable feedback to be widely disseminated through a variety of means.

**Recommendation 46**

Communications need to be clear, consistent, regular, accurate and professional. Residents need to be kept informed by way of a range of means to suit their needs. For the most vulnerable, this could include targeted personal contact.

**Recommendation 47**

Due regard should be paid to the Equality Act 2010 in consultation and communication. This should be reviewed regularly to ensure equalities issues are being addressed.

**Recommendation 48**

Business processes to log questions and respond in a timely manner should be developed and communicated in a variety of ways

*Consultation***Recommendation 49**

Ward councillors should be used as a link to residents as they are likely to recognise the impact of regeneration on their areas.

**Recommendation 50**

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) produced by the Council's Estate Regeneration Team should be prepared to be included with news communicated at each stage of the regeneration process.

**Recommendation 51**

Consultation with tenants, leaseholders and freeholders should be transparent and inclusive. Relevant documentation should be made available in a variety of formats. This should be co-produced.

**Recommendation 52**

Surveys should be co-produced and piloted in order to ensure that questions are relevant and clearly put.

*Design***Recommendation 53**

Professional companies such as the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) should be engaged to work with residents on possible designs and the master planning process.

**Recommendation 54**

Visual exhibitions should be developed to help explain processes. These should be developed over the life of the project and on permanent display locally.

**Recommendation 55**

Visits to estates to look at relevant regeneration projects should be built in to the timetable at each stage of the process

*Building***Recommendation 56**

All estate regeneration projects should seek to improve the quality of homes and the built environment

**Recommendation 57**

Once it has been agreed to carry out regeneration on an estate, this should be noted on the property register

**Recommendation 58**

Building standards should be consulted on, communicated widely and strictly adhered to. Feedback mechanisms on the quality of homes should also be initiated from the inception of the building phase.

**Recommendation 59**

Site tours should be held to comparable schemes in other boroughs, enabling people to visualise real spaces rather than just drawings and models

## *Contracts*

### **Recommendation 60**

Contracts and other related documentation should be open and accessible for residents to discuss and scrutinise in a timely manner.

### **Recommendation 61**

PFI schemes should be subject to extra safeguards including:

- Lambeth taking clear ownership of the project
- Long utilities contracts being examined closely for potential benefits

## *Equalities*

### **Recommendation 62**

Equalities Impact Assessments (EIAs) are integral to all regeneration processes. The guidance, and support, of the Council's Equalities Team needs to be sought at the beginning through to completion of regeneration projects. The EIA action plan will seek to address the disproportionate impact of regeneration upon people who hold multiple protected characteristics. These action plans need to be monitored and reported on regularly, whilst being flexible enough to identify and address any unknown consequences. The EIA action plan should be developed and reviewed in collaboration with residents, council officers, developers and contractors.

## Introduction

The Resident Involvement in Housing Scrutiny Commission was established in the spring of 2015 following the submission of a commission proposal by Cllr Jacqui Dyer. Acknowledging the importance of housing as an overarching priority straddling all three key outcomes in the Council's Community Plan, as well as the potential opportunities posed by the decision to bring Lambeth's housing management services back in house, the Scrutiny Chairs felt that this issue warranted further exploration and approved the establishment of the commission in early 2015.

Over the ensuing weeks councillors were appointed and the range of the Commission scoped. Members of the Commission identified a number of core questions which they wanted to see addressed in the commission. These included:

- In what practical ways can residents be more involved in the governance, scrutiny and delivery of works and services related to housing?
- How can residents be involved in developing key performance indicators and performance monitoring to influence the shape of housing services?
- What further systemic/cooperative mechanisms would enable residents to contribute to continuous improvement in the delivery of housing works and services?

Based on these questions, the following terms of reference were agreed:

- To investigate and review the opportunities available to promote resident involvement in the governance, scrutiny and delivery of housing works and services delivered by Lambeth Council
- To propose alternative mechanisms to facilitate resident engagement and control, bearing in mind any skills training and support which may be required
- To investigate best practice in this field in other local authorities across London (and more widely) as well as housing associations and regional/national organisations, while acknowledging that the appetite for resident control and involvement varies across the borough
- To ensure that appropriate value is placed on resident contributions when establishing and monitoring key performance indicators (KPIs), leading to better outcomes
- To look at ways of improving communication with residents, for example by avoiding the use of "Council language" where possible and ensuring the level of communication is appropriately targeted
- To look at lessons arising from the above points to examine what can be learnt in relation to estate regeneration projects in terms of resident involvement

The table below sets out the Commission's information-gathering sessions. A full timeline of the commission's activity can be found at Annex 2.

16 April 2015	<b>Session 1</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Introductory and question and answer session with Cabinet Member for Housing and Commissioning Director.</li><li>• Agreement of commission scope and outline future meeting arrangements</li></ul>
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2 June 2015	<p><b>Session 2</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reporting back of initial research carried out by commission members; discussion of key documents obtained via desk-based research</li> </ul>
18 June 2015	<p><b>Session 3</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appointment of co-optees and identification of proposed meeting themes / key contributors</li> </ul>
20 July 2015	<p><b>Session 4</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contributor session 1 – a number of contributors with experience and/or expertise in resident involvement were invited to an evidence-gathering session of the commission, including Lambeth officers, representatives from housing associations, local practitioners and a university lecturer in housing management practice</li> </ul>
30 July 2015	<p><b>Session 5</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contributor session 2 – a further session with Lambeth officers and expert witnesses including a consultant and trainer in resident involvement methods, a representative of national best practice body TPAS (Tenant Participation and Advisory Service), senior housing officers from the London Borough of Camden (including one former Lambeth Living Board member) and housing association representatives</li> </ul>
2 September 2015	<p><b>Session 6</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commission meeting to discuss findings and agree outline conclusions and recommendations</li> </ul>
6 October 2015	<p><b>Session 7</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public meeting: round table sessions to gather feedback on draft recommendations prior to their finalisation (in addition to which, consultation was carried out with existing tenant and leaseholder representatives, via local councillors, at area forum and TRA network meetings, via social media and by way of an online survey)</li> </ul>
22 October 2015	<p><b>Session 8</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contributor session dedicated to estate regeneration including among attendees the London Assembly Housing Committee chair, a university lecturer in critical urban geography and local residents as well as Lambeth officers</li> </ul>
27 October 2015	<p><b>Session 9</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meeting of commission members to discuss findings from 22 Oct regeneration session and agree outline conclusions and recommendations on this theme</li> </ul>

The report begins with some contextual information about resident involvement and is followed by eight sections which reflect the commission's key findings, around which its recommendations are grouped: Principles; Placing Residents at the Centre of the Service; Improving Satisfaction and Value for Money; Smarter Working – Improving Use of Data, Intelligence and Insight; Striving for Excellence; Organisational Culture and Ethos; Mechanisms and Structures; and Estate Regeneration.

## Background

In November 2014, Cabinet agreed (Report 14/15-84), subject to consultation with residents and other stakeholders, that the management agreement with Lambeth Living – the borough's Arm's Length Management Organisation (ALMO) – would not be renewed upon its expiry in June 2015, and instead housing management services would be brought back in house. This decision was taken with the aim of providing a solid basis for improvements to the service and allowing better integration between housing and other council services. The new service would be called Lambeth Housing Management (LHM).

As part of the consultation process, research was carried out via the existing involvement structures including area forums, Tenants' and Leaseholders' Councils and the annual residents' conference, and a survey ("Future Model of Housing Management" – referred to hereafter as the "Future Model survey") was sent to 26,671 households, with 1744 being returned. The responses indicated that many people were interested in being involved but were not satisfied with existing arrangements and felt their opinions were not being listened to. Among the findings of the survey:

- 45% of respondents did not believe they could influence decisions affecting housing
- Knowledge of the existing area-based and borough-wide forums was low; 70% of respondents had never heard of area forums or did not attend meetings. This could be for a variety of reasons including poor chairing and a lack of relevance
- Many people did not attend meetings due to difficulties with timing or access but only 4% thought such meetings were irrelevant or were not interested
- Those respondents who had a desire to get involved were interested in decisions about the quality of services, budgets and spending, and scrutinising performance

The subsequent Cabinet report (14/15-175), Lambeth Housing Management Services, presented in April 2015, explained how a project board had been set up in order to oversee the reintegration process, chaired by the Cabinet Member for Housing and including councillors, trade union representatives, tenants and leaseholders. Part of the remit of this project board was to look at resident engagement and control and look at ways of addressing the survey findings. This took place concurrently with the Commission's evidence gathering and whilst they were discrete entities, care was taken to ensure the two pieces of work were complementary and joined up. To this end Councillor Matt Parr sat on both the project board and the Commission (as an advisory member), and senior Housing officers regularly attended Commission meetings. While the project board was focused principally on co-production with Lambeth residents, the Commission looked further afield as well as locally to examples of best practice in order to add value.

In November 2015, a further report – Improving Housing Management Services and Wider Integration (15/16-82) – was taken to Cabinet, building on the plans set out in April. The fourth recommendation concerned proposals to consult on changing the engagement governance structure for Housing Management tenants and leaseholders in response to the Future Model survey results and the work of the project board. The report references the work of the Resident Involvement in Housing Commission and includes as an appendix the then-draft recommendations, acknowledging that many of the themes raised resonated with its own findings. It is the expectation of the Commission that, as the process of developing resident involvement continues, these recommendations are implemented.

### What is resident involvement?

Many definitions have been put forward for resident involvement but all of them involve the concept of taking part in decision making processes and/or influencing decisions about works and services – often involving "the sharing of information, ideas and power" (Scottish

Office (1999) *Partners in Participation: A National Strategy for Tenant Participation*). This can of course take a variety of forms, ranging from a verbal complaint or suggestion, through participation in a working group or resident panel, to chairing a forum or being a board member. It is acknowledged that different mechanisms may suit different people and a recurring theme of the commission's findings is that there is no "one size fits all" solution to resident involvement. This means that a variety of avenues are needed if we are to maximise involvement, ranging from better provision of information to genuine opportunities for residents to exercise control over housing services.

## **Social Housing Management**

Council housing is owned and managed in a range of ways including:

- Retention by the Local Authority, under which a local authority owns, maintains and manages a stock of housing. Some of this can also be managed independently by Tenant Management Organisations (TMOs) – bodies set up under the Government's right to manage legislation
- By stock transfer to Registered Social Landlords, under which the ownership and day-to-day management of a local authority's social housing is transferred to a Registered Social Landlord – also known as a Housing Association or Registered Provider (RP)
- By Arm's Length Management Organisations (ALMOs), under which a local authority sets up a company specifically to manage social housing stock. The ALMO has the same management responsibilities as any local authority; however the authority still owns the social housing and retains strategic responsibilities

RPs also own and manage their own social housing.

As stated above, Lambeth's social housing stock has until recently been managed by an ALMO, Lambeth Living, though in excess of 70 RPs also own and manage housing stock in the borough (amounting to around 20,000 units). Of these, the ten largest own around 90% of the stock.

RPs are encouraged to have good governance structures and include resident representatives on their boards, and many of the larger ones take this seriously, setting up formal committees and sub-committees but also running social media operations and resident panels – indeed, a number of the best practice examples cited by the commission come from RPs – while Local Authorities operate under specific legislative requirements with regards to governance and resident involvement.

## **Terminology**

In this report, the term "resident" is used to refer to people in the borough who live in housing provided by Lambeth Housing Management or Registered Providers (Housing Associations) regardless of tenure. Where tenants or leaseholders are being referred to separately, this is specifically stated.

There are also many terms used for companies who own and manage social housing outside of Local Authority control. These are referred to variously as registered social landlords, housing associations or registered providers (RPs); the last of these terms is used throughout this report.

## Section 1: Principles

### The National Context and Regulatory Framework

The current legislative framework governing resident involvement in housing dates back to the Localism Act 2011, under which the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) took on the role of funder and regulator for RPs. The Act introduced a “co-regulatory” approach alongside a set of standards. Co-regulation gave rise to a lighter regulatory touch, with board members and councillors responsible for ensuring providers’ businesses were well-managed and compliant with regulatory requirements. Providers in turn have to support tenants to shape and scrutinise service delivery and hold boards and councillors to account. The standards are split into “economic” and “consumer”; while the economic standards apply only to RPs (because the regulator has no power to set economic standards for local authorities), the consumer standards apply across the board.

Among the four consumer standards is the Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard. This states, in para 1.2, that:

*“Registered providers shall ensure that tenants are given a wide range of opportunities to influence and be involved in:*

- (a) the formulation of their landlord’s housing related policies and strategic priorities*
- (b) the making of decisions about how housing related services are delivered, including the setting of service standards*
- (c) the scrutiny of their landlord’s performance and the making of recommendations to their landlord about how performance might be improved*
- (d) the management of their homes, where applicable*
- (e) the management of repair and maintenance services, such as commissioning and undertaking a range of repair tasks, as agreed with landlords, and the sharing in savings made, and*
- (f) agreeing local offers for service delivery.”*

Under Section 2 (“Specific expectations”) the document goes on to state (paras 2.2.1 to 2.2.4) that:

*“Registered providers shall support their tenants to develop and implement opportunities for involvement and empowerment, including by:*

- (a) supporting their tenants to exercise their Right to Manage or otherwise exercise housing management functions, where appropriate*
- (b) supporting the formation and activities of tenant panels or equivalent groups and responding in a constructive and timely manner to them*
- (c) the provision of timely and relevant performance information to support effective scrutiny by tenants of their landlord’s performance in a form which registered providers seek to agree with their tenants. Such provision must include the publication of an annual report which should include information on repair and maintenance budgets, and*
- (d) providing support to tenants to build their capacity to be more effectively involved.*

*Registered providers shall consult with tenants on the scope of local offers for service delivery. This shall include how performance will be monitored, reported to and scrutinised by tenants and arrangements for reviewing these on a periodic basis.*

*Registered providers shall consult with tenants, setting out clearly the costs and benefits of relevant options, if they are proposing to change their landlord or when proposing a significant change in their management arrangements.*

*Registered providers shall consult tenants at least once every three years on the best way of involving tenants in the governance and scrutiny of the organisation's housing management service."*

In 2012 the Centre for Public Scrutiny produced a paper detailing a number of case studies in tenant scrutiny and co-regulation in social housing which the Commission found very persuasive in outlining the benefits of embracing co-regulation – for satisfaction, scrutiny, involvement, value for money and delivering improvements. Some of these are referred to later in the report. A key theme that emerges is an emphasis on rigorous and robust scrutiny with residents playing a key role in an independent, formal process to make evidence-led changes.

### Lambeth's Co-operative Model and Co-production

In May 2010 Lambeth Council published a paper entitled "The Cooperative Council: A new settlement between citizens and public services, a new approach to public service delivery". The white paper set out a vision to deliver better and more responsive public services by greater use of cooperative approaches and values. This involves residents, councillors and council staff working together in the design and delivery of services and related activities, intended to ensure that they are relevant and that the right benefits are delivered. The intention of the Cooperative Council is to "listen and work with local people to help them achieve what they want" (Lambeth's Community Plan 2013-16).

The Community Plan also explains the importance of "co-production" in the way the council works. This term refers to service users and service providers working together at every stage, utilising the knowledge and expertise of the service user – in this case tenants and leaseholders – and discovering more about their needs and wishes in order that resources can be targeted appropriately and the most effective outcomes can be achieved.

The aims of this Commission, and in particular the principles outlined in Recommendation 1, align with these concepts and it is clear that resident involvement as defined above cannot be achieved without adhering to them. Co-operative co-regulation and co-production also need to be genuine – offering real, meaningful empowerment – and inclusive – including a range of people who may hold differing views – in order to achieve resident buy-in and realise the benefits of this approach. Value needs to be placed on resident involvement as an indicator that improves performance and leads to better outcomes

### "Horses for Courses" – the Need for a Range of Mechanisms

The regulatory standards cite the need for a variety of options for residents to get involved. This is also a common thread running through the examples of best practice from the co-regulatory champions (CfPS "Stories in Tenant Scrutiny and Co-regulation in Social Housing") with the recognition that tenants and leaseholders are hugely diverse groups of people and in order to be as inclusive as possible and meet equalities duties it is necessary to have a range of mechanisms to suit different needs, skills and appetites. The results of the Future Model survey also allude to this, with some residents stating they just want to be better informed, some wanting "more of a say", and others interested in being actively involved.

Section 7 of the report goes into more detail about suggested mechanisms; suffice it to say here that these should include both fixed and flexible structures. Fixed structures could

include ongoing area-based or borough-wide groups while flexible structures could be more suited to time-limited subject-specific task and finish groups.

### The Importance of Data and Intelligence

Effective use of data and intelligence is vital to any organisation in terms of not only providing a strong evidence base for actions and decisions, but also increasingly to ensure that scarce resources are efficiently deployed. In the course of its research the Commission heard from Family Mosaic, one of the largest RPs in the South East, whose report “Changing Places” proposes that one of the best ways to place residents at the centre of service improvement is to use “big data” – information routinely collected via regular interactions with their residents, including processes like complaints and surveys. The argument made is that traditional forum-style involvement mechanisms consistently only attract a small number of familiar residents and that using big data, along with social media, enables a far greater proportion of residents to have their views taken on board without needing to attend meetings or even leave their homes.

While it is acknowledged that Family Mosaic’s stock profile, with around 80% street properties, is markedly different from that of Lambeth, which has more estate-based social housing, and therefore the dynamics (and hence conclusions) in terms of traditional forum-style mechanisms may well be different, the concept of using big data to obtain large-scale customer insight is an interesting one. Lambeth officers, in giving evidence, reported that LHM holds a significant amount of data on its residents, collected over a number of years, and that business intelligence is in the process of being conducted on this; the Commission expects that this approach can be developed to help identify where resources are best spent to benefit residents. Further information on the use of data and insight can be found in Section 4.

### Value for Money: “An Investment, Not a Cost”

As alluded to above, resident involvement in housing needs very much to be considered in the context of reducing resources and value for money therefore has to be a key consideration. The Commission believes that the evidence for resident involvement bringing positive benefits in this regard is strong, and that while it is acknowledged that implementing its recommendations will come at a cost, this will in fact be more than recouped. While there are currently budgets for resident involvement, the Commission wishes to see more investment in order that such savings can be achieved on a bigger scale.

The AmicusHorizon / University of Westminster paper “Success, Satisfaction & Scrutiny; the Business Benefits of Involving Residents” reports significant savings made in procurement and complaints totalling at least £2.7m per annum “attributable in large part to resident involvement in co-regulation”. At the same time satisfaction levels have rocketed from 55% in 2008, when the company was in regulatory supervision and began on its journey revamping its resident involvement mechanisms, to an astonishing 97% today. In their evidence to the Commission, the report’s co-authors explained how resident governance structures were set up covering all areas of customer-facing work, with the focus placed squarely on the areas residents found most valuable, such as repairs, anti-social behaviour and the quick turnaround of properties. An initial cash injection was required which amounted to around £700k per annum at its peak but this was reducing and the resultant savings ran into millions. Though there were always questions about cause and effect, the trends were undeniable and it was clear that placing residents at the centre of decision making had made the difference. This included a radical drop in complaints after residents were brought into the process, including charring panels, and significant savings in procurement when residents became engaged in the selection and recruitment of contractors. The report concludes that “The benefits of resident involvement are clear. It has

simultaneously delivered improved services, higher satisfaction and improved value for money.”

Further, the Tenants Leading Change (TLC) March 2015 report “An Investment Not a Cost: The Business Benefits of Tenant Involvement” details similar conclusions. TLC conducted wide ranging research among tenants and landlords aimed at supporting the anecdotal evidence of a link between resident involvement and cost savings with empirical data. An online survey was set up to which 210 landlords and 194 tenants nationwide responded. Data from this suggested that savings of £29 per property could be achieved by a range of resident involvement activities, including tenant-led reviews and involving tenants in contract tendering. Though TLC accepts that these figures are unverified, it also conducted similar analysis on five case study organisations – among them AmicusHorizon – and the verified data from these suggested savings of £94 per property could be achieved through increased resident involvement. If replicated in Lambeth, this would amount to around £2m of savings. As the National Tenant Organisation’s 2012 publication “Tenant Panels: Options for Accountability” states: “Good landlords understand that listening to tenants is not just the right thing to do. It is also good for business”. In the current financial climate, it is less a case of whether Lambeth can afford to invest in resident involvement; rather, can it afford *not* to?

At the public meeting held by the Commission in October 2015 to seek feedback on the then-draft recommendations, residents were almost universally supportive of these principles but stressed the need for real decision-making powers to be devolved to tenants and leaseholders.

#### **Recommendation 1**

**The following principles should be followed by council officers when involving residents in any aspect of housing services:**

- ***Co-operative co-regulation.*** Co-regulation is defined by the Chartered Institute of Housing as “*an approach where housing organisations’ frameworks for directing, accounting for, monitoring, assessing and modifying their own behaviour and performance are based on residents’ priorities, views, and engagement with relevant processes*”. Elected Councillors are also bound by these principles. This means officers should be monitoring all their decisions and behaviours from a resident’s perspective (i.e. how residents experience each interaction with an officer either in person or in writing)
- ***Empowering residents through co-production.*** Co-production is when an organisation (in this case the Council) works with a wide range of people on an issue without starting with a fixed outcome.
- ***Recognising that there is no “one size fits all” solution*** and thus it is important to have a range of structures and mechanisms – both fixed and flexible – to facilitate resident involvement.
- ***Rigorous use of data, intelligence and insight*** to inform improvement, engagement and involvement.
- ***Value for money*** – resident involvement has been shown not only to drive up satisfaction but also to lead to budget savings.

## **Section 2: Placing Residents at the Centre of the Service**

### Training and Skills

In order to be able to have real opportunities to affect change and to implement the principles outlined in Section 1, it is vital that residents are equipped with the right skills and support. In his evidence to the Commission, Tim Morton of Engage Associates, a trainer and consultant in the field, stressed the importance of “serious training” to enable people to properly fulfil roles on resident involvement structures. Similar assertions are made by AmicusHorizon in “Success, Satisfaction & Scrutiny” and it is also a common theme running through the case studies appended to the Tenants Leading Change report referred to in Section 1.

This training will of course vary depending on the nature of the role a resident is hoping to play. It could be participating in or chairing meetings, giving people the confidence to speak in public and get their point across. It could be finance and budget training, enabling people to manage devolved budgets and possibly write their own funding bids. Or it could be more akin to professional skills development such as in contract management, procurement or complaints processes for those who wish to get involved in these areas (complaints in particular was an area where feedback from the public meeting showed an appetite for residents being more involved). There is a balance to be struck between providing the comprehensiveness of training and not wanting to deter people. However, it should also be noted that there is likely a huge wealth of skills already out there among Lambeth’s residents which could be harnessed and developed to enable people to play significant roles in areas such as procurement, policy development, scrutiny and performance monitoring, and tapping into this skillset would be extremely valuable.

### High Trees Community Development Trust: Community in Action

The Commission took evidence from Margaret Pierre-Jarret of High Trees Community Development Trust in Tulse Hill regarding training and skills development in the community. The Trust has been in operation for 17 years and was set up as part of a stock transfer from Lambeth to three RPs. They are firmly rooted in the community and deliver projects, training and personal development such as basic skills programmes, employment support and after school activities. In 2013 they devised a package of courses aimed at residents to help people engage better on Tenants and Residents’ Associations (TRAs), including member induction, testing services, budgets, personal skills, scrutiny and equalities training. They were then approached by Lambeth Living to work in partnership to provide the courses for its residents. While courses are sometimes run for whole TRAs, they are also often attended by mixed groups and experience shows that this helps people to share knowledge and feel supported. The Trust is now accredited by the Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH) and delivers a Level 2 Community in Action course. This includes modules on housing associations and organisations in London; voluntary, community and public sector agencies; team working; diversity; community engagement; and planning and participating in community events. In addition to this a CIH Level 3 Education and Training course is also offered; this is the first qualification for teaching adults and is free to people who agree to then volunteer their services at digital hubs (which provide free online access for LHM residents who lack internet access).

### Incentive and Reward

As well as training being necessary to equip residents with the appropriate skills, it can also act as an incentive for people to get more involved and therefore help as a recruitment tool. The feeling at the public meeting held by the Commission to gather feedback on its then-

draft recommendations reinforced this; in particular that training which was accredited and offered qualifications would be a way of selling resident involvement, including to younger people or anyone wishing to enhance their CVs – which in turn could also help increase employment prospects. Reward and incentive systems vary among authorities and RPs, and some believe it encourages people for the wrong reasons; because of this the Commission does not believe financial incentives would be appropriate but wishes residents themselves to help co-produce a range of recruitment incentives. Examples given during the evidence phase included vouchers for swimming/gym/leisure activities or hall hire (e.g. for a TRA party), as well as the training example given above.

It was also noted by almost everyone giving evidence that engaging young people was a particular struggle and that they were under-represented in resident involvement structures and mechanisms. One proposal put forward to help remedy this was for young people not named on the rent book to be allowed to participate in the same way as those who are, and the Commission recommends that a strategy be devised to achieve this.

### Cooperative Training

The learning from High Trees Community Development Trust is that running training which is open to different groups can help improve the sharing of knowledge and insight more generally and therefore gives it greater value. This is backed up by the “One Team” culture developed by AmicusHorizon as part of its revamp of resident involvement and cited as a key reason that it has been so successful (this is referred to further in Section 6). One of the key facets of One Team is that residents and staff work together towards a set of common goals, and training is a big part of this; the Commission therefore believes that holding joint training involving staff and residents would help develop shared understanding, break down barriers of trust and raise awareness of issues and potential solutions from both sides which may not be picked up otherwise. Residents themselves, at the public meeting, supported this idea, which they believed would help people feel more valued and supported.

### Delegated Budgets

Another important aspect of demonstrating that resident involvement is genuine is to have a certain amount of devolved budgeting. While it is acknowledged that the current Getting Involved Grant allows for an element of this, the Commission would like to see these grants strengthened in order that they could go beyond small youth projects or fun days and instead give residents the power to carry out more substantial work such as estate improvements or TRA hall refurbishments, subject to appropriate bidding and monitoring processes. Similar models operate in Wandsworth, where area panels can allocate small improvement grants of around £30k to TRAs, and in Camden, where each of the five District Management Committees (DMCs) have devolved budgets to spend on things such as environmental improvements, tenant hall upkeep and social activities. This is seen to work well as it empowers residents, and such ideas were strongly supported at the public meeting.

**The principles outlined in Recommendation 1 should be done by:**

**Recommendation 2**

**Providing training and skills development opportunities for residents (e.g. training in chairing meetings, confidence building, taking part in committees, and managing budgets).**

**Recommendation 3**

**Involving residents in housing services development. This will include policy development, decision-making and the scrutiny of performance. This will use skills people have and develop new skills (e.g. in contract management, procurement panels for contractors and sub-contractors, complaints processes including the review of Council decisions).**

**Recommendation 4**

**Training should offer recognised accreditation/qualifications with progression routes.**

**Recommendation 5**

**Training should be done cooperatively (i.e. jointly with officers if appropriate) to develop shared understanding of issues and solutions. This should include training on the internal workings, structure and processes of the Council to raise awareness among residents.**

**Recommendation 6**

**A range of recruitment incentives to encourage participation should be developed. These should be produced with tenants and leaseholders, and monitored and reviewed regularly.**

**Recommendation 7**

**A strategy should be developed for involving residents not named on the rent book, residents on estates that are privately renting and those renting through social landlords. The above should include young adults.**

**Recommendation 8**

**Budgets should be identified for recommendations 2-7.**

**Recommendation 9**

**Delegated budgets should be available to local or area resident groups to manage**

### **Section 3: Improving Satisfaction and Value for Money**

As outlined in Section 1, value for money is a major consideration for the Commission – indeed, the Best Value duty on local authorities dictates that the Council must seek to achieve this in everything it does. While Section 1 of the report makes arguments regarding the correlation between involving residents and achieving cost savings and satisfaction increases, this section touches on key performance indicators.

The Commission also recommends the pooling of resources when organising training, not just between residents and LHM staff but with RPs and other groups wherever this might lead to increased value, in terms of pooled costs and experience or greater shared knowledge, or both.

#### Key Performance Indicators

Key performance indicators (KPIs) are used by most organisations to measure performance, which in turn links to satisfaction. LHM inherited a series of indicators from Lambeth Living and these are published on the website; however, there are number of improvements the Commission believes could be made to the KPIs themselves and the way in which they are presented.

Firstly, KPIs need to be benchmarked in order to make them more meaningful. Though it is useful to track trends in individual KPIs, it is seldom clear whether performance is good or bad unless comparisons can be made; this ideally includes other similar local authorities as well as national and London averages to give the fullest context possible. Having more benchmarked KPIs would not only allow residents to see how LHM is performing against other housing providers and hold them to account, but would also allow LHM staff to identify best practice and take steps to learn from this to improve services here in Lambeth – thus acting as a lever for change.

Another point made in evidence was that KPIs need to be meaningful to residents. It was felt by many that some indicators were currently poorly worded or unclear and the way they were reported could also be improved. In order to achieve this the Commission recommends that residents should be involved in developing local KPIs and also have a say in how they are best presented to ensure the data gathered is accessible and user-friendly. The experience from AmicusHorizon, where satisfaction across the five “gold medal” KPIs (overall satisfaction, complaints satisfaction, repairs satisfaction, anti-social behaviour satisfaction and re-let times) is 97%, demonstrates the effect that this can have. They stressed in their evidence how important performance indicators are in terms of evidencing improvements and building trust, and they supply tablet computers to those residents involved in their governance structures via which regular, up-to-date information can be accessed, at varying levels of locality.

It is interesting here also to note that satisfaction levels among TMOs in Lambeth tend to be higher than LHM managed stock even when performance is not much different. This suggests that residents find satisfaction purely in having greater control and empowerment.

**Recommendation 10**

**Training should be run jointly (with housing officers/ housing associations and/or other groups as appropriate).**

**Recommendation 11**

**All key performance indicators (KPIs) used to measure the performance of housing services should be benchmarked locally and/or nationally.**

**Recommendation 12**

**Residents should be involved in developing local KPIs.**

**Recommendation 13**

**All KPIs should be presented in a range of formats (i.e. written/visual/graphical), to be developed by a cooperative working group in order to ensure they are accessible and user-friendly.**

## **Section 4: Smarter Working – Improving Use of Data, Intelligence and Insight**

Effective collection and use of data, intelligence and insight are, as alluded to in Section 1, vital elements in ensuring housing services are evidence-driven and appropriately targeted. Lambeth already holds a significant amount of data on its residents but the Commission believes more could be done to make sense of it and use it in a more intelligent way. The example of Family Mosaic is particularly pertinent here. Their report “Changing Places” outlines a move towards big data to understand the needs and experiences of all tenants, not just those who engage in more traditional ways, such as attending meetings. This can help to understand how services are used and help to determine where interventions or improvements could have the greatest effect; it also reduces the burden on more traditionally involved residents to be “representative” of their area or estate when this is in effect often impossible.

It is also necessary that data systems across the Council – not necessarily just in Housing – which hold potentially valuable big data on our residents, be joined up. This would have the effect of maximising the level of insight provided and allowing for better decisions based on more robust evidence; it would also help to increase value for money, reducing duplication by negating the need to collect and analyse the same data more than once. Though it is accepted that some data systems may not currently be compatible, and that work will be required to conduct analysis of the data currently held in order to make best use of it, the Commission believes a strong IT backing is essential for LHM to make its services the best it can be. Furthermore, better use of data and intelligence does not begin and end with information held locally by Lambeth; it could – and, the Commission, believes, should – extend to aggregating this with other publicly available data, such as indices of multiple deprivation, to develop services to be targeted to where there is the greatest need. These ideas around use of data and intelligence were strongly supported at the public meeting with residents.

### Social Media

Another very useful insight into residents’ needs and views is social media, particularly Twitter. While the Commission is pleased to see LHM actively using social media to communicate with residents it believes this could be further enhanced – for example, Family Mosaic, which has similar numbers of stock to Lambeth, has almost 5,000 followers on Twitter, compared to LHM’s 800. In “Changing Places”, Family Mosaic outline the fact that many residents use Twitter as a way of engaging with them on a wide range of themes, including repairs, service charges, events and customer service issues, and note that this rise in social media use is done on residents’ own terms. The Birmingham-based RP Midland Heart also recently revamped its resident engagement structures to great effect; among the successes were social media surgeries and Twitter debates, which take place within their housing scrutiny structure using hashtags to help categorise comments.

Expanding social media reach enables more insight to be captured and complements the big data examples outlined above. The Commission also feels that enhanced use of Twitter could help engage more young people, who are often under-represented in more traditional resident involvement mechanisms. Feedback from the public meeting was that residents supported the idea of increasing LHM’s social media presence but there was also an acknowledgement that this was only one of many avenues which could be used to involve residents.

## Estate Walkabouts

While better use of data and social media are important, there is still very much a place for individual interactions with residents; estate walkabouts in particular were very strongly supported at the public meeting. These can help put flesh on the bones in terms of interpreting and contextualising raw data as well as providing reassurance to residents that they are being listened to – as long as the appropriate processes and mechanisms are in place. This means ensuring walkabouts happen at different times of day and across the week to allow for the fact that people’s availability – due to a whole range of commitments – differs hugely across an estate and nobody should be disadvantaged because of this. It also requires the interactions to be meaningful; i.e. those conducting the walkabout should be in a position to provide relevant information, or remedy or escalate a concern, and action points should be captured and dealt with effectively. Camden officers, in their evidence, explained how in their borough door knocking often took place to gather qualitative feedback and hear residents’ concerns first hand, but also to share standards and performance indicators, and reported that this had helped counter the view that there was no point engaging as nothing would ever get done. The Commission would like to see similar initiatives here in Lambeth.

A final comment on this theme arising from the consultation meeting with residents at which the draft recommendations were tested concerns communication not between LHM and residents, but between groups of residents themselves. Many people felt that some kind of contact database which would allow better information sharing between estates, for example, would be beneficial, and while the Commission accepts there could be data protection issues, it sees no reason why an opt-in system could not be used.

### **Recommendation 14**

**Systems used to collect and store data should include other publicly-available information such as data on unemployment and income levels.**

### **Recommendation 15**

**Data should be used to inform decision making.**

### **Recommendation 16**

**Estate walkabouts led by officers should take place regularly. Processes and mechanisms (such as varied dates and times of walkabouts) should be agreed with residents and clear action points produced and dealt with.**

### **Recommendation 17**

**The use of social media should be increased.**

### **Recommendation 18**

**A contact database of residents should be established using an “opt in” system such as My Lambeth.**

## **Section 5: Striving for Excellence**

The Commission notes and supports LHM's desire in its Business Plan to be "one of the best (housing providers) in London" and has therefore included a short section in this report aimed at ways in which this claim can be followed through, demonstrated and evidenced.

The first point to note is that, as mentioned previously, some form of benchmarking is necessary to ascertain how LHM is performing against similar organisations. While it is accepted that sometimes this can be difficult – for example, because of differing performance indicators or variations in reporting timelines or data collection periods – it is nonetheless vital to compare performance data both locally and nationally in order to give a true picture of how effective a service is being provided.

Further to this, the regulatory standards as referred to in Section 1 should of course be met and, one imagines, exceeded if the "best in London" claim is to be realised. In order to truly strive for excellence in resident involvement specifically, the Commission also feels that LHM should aim to achieve some form of accreditation to demonstrate this. The Tenant Advisory and Participation Service (TPAS), who gave evidence to the Commission on best practice, have an accreditation scheme which may be of interest, involving a progression through various standards to ensure continual improvement; this was commended in the 2007 Cave review of social housing regulation.

### **Recommendation 19**

**Lambeth Housing Management (LHM) performance data should be reported alongside local and national data (i.e. benchmarked).**

### **Recommendation 20**

**LHM should continue to exceed the housing consumer standards and, in the longer term, aim to achieve the Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS) Resident Involvement Accreditation for Landlords.**

**[http://www.tpas.org.uk/landlord\\_accreditation](http://www.tpas.org.uk/landlord_accreditation)**

### **Recommendation 21**

**A clear set of standards, providing systematic review of LHM's approach to involvement should be published.**

### **Recommendation 22**

**Standards should be externally reviewed, for example by TPAS.**

## Section 6: Organisational Culture and Ethos

A key theme linking purveyors of good practice in the field of resident involvement is that of an organisational culture which promotes trust. There are various ways in which this is achieved but without it, it is impossible to get residents on board and attempts at embedding co-regulation with residents at the centre are less likely to succeed.

At a basic level this means listening, responding, engaging and respecting others, and adhering to standard business practices, particularly around contactability. Residents we heard from felt frustrated at the fact that their communications were not always responded to, whether it be by email or phone; indeed on some occasions people were unable to even leave messages as full voice mail boxes had not been emptied. This can give the impression that residents are not valued and can drive a wedge between staff and residents. When messages *are* received and acknowledged, people often feel their views are not taken on board and that no action is taken, again leading to a lack of trust.

In the Tenants Leading Change report, there are a number of examples of successful resident involvement and positive staff culture going hand in hand. This includes Hull City Council, who report that the improvements they made in tenant involvement, which led to an increase in satisfaction levels from 50% in 2003 to 80% in 2014, also led to an improved staff culture of trust, accountability, transparency and partnership working. Similarly, Community Gateway Association reported that there was “a huge cultural effect of having tenants around all the time working closely with staff”, contributing to “a family culture where everyone sees each other’s point of view”.

This also resonates with the AmicusHorizon “One Team” culture mentioned in Section 1 which is crucial to the increased satisfaction and performance – and resultant huge cost savings – their “Success, Satisfaction & Scrutiny” report outlines. The University of Westminster academics who interviewed Amicus staff reported to us that there had been some initial resistance to the idea of One Team but once that initial scepticism had abated – due in no small part to the realisation that residents *want* staff to succeed in order to improve their services – this culture of togetherness went from strength to strength. We were told it worked because it came from the top, there was a zero tolerance approach to moaning about residents, and positive language became the norm. Examples of embedding One Team include joint training involving staff and residents (see also Section 3) and working to a clear set of defined common goals. AmicusHorizon also require Board member attendance at resident Area Panels, demonstrating that residents are being taken seriously.

It is vital, too, that effective joined up working is taking place between Housing and other linked departments and organisations; this includes other Council departments such as social care, revenues and benefits and others, but also strategic partners including the police, and voluntary groups in the borough. This will ensure that efforts are coordinated to tackle common problems and in turn lead to greater efficiency.

### Lambeth’s Cooperative Behaviours

One driver for achieving these improvements in staff culture is the internal staff appraisal system, underpinned by Lambeth’s Cooperative Behaviours. This sets out a series of attitudes which are expected to be demonstrated by staff, such as integrity, taking ownership, working collaboratively and focusing on citizens among others. The Commission wishes to highlight the cooperative behaviours in its recommendations to reiterate how important these are to achieve the sort of organisational culture which is commensurate with successful resident involvement, picking out in particular “supporting learning and development”, without which the training and skills development outlined in Section 2 will not

be realised, and “thinking strategically and creating clarity”, which reinforces much of what is said earlier regarding use of data and smarter working.

The Commission also wishes to highlight the work done by the Deputy Cabinet Member for Community Engagement and Customer Access and officers in 2015 and the resultant Community Engagement toolkit, which contains a wealth of information on how to engage with citizens more effectively than when using traditional engagement methods.

**Recommendation 23**

**Lambeth Housing staff and contractors should be trained and assessed on positive behaviours such as ‘supporting learning and development’ (level 3) and ‘thinking strategically and creating clarity’ (levels 1-4).**

(<https://www.lambeth.gov.uk/sites/default/files/ec-lambeth-behaviours-cooperative-council.pdf> )

**Recommendation 24**

**Basic business practices should be adhered to such as voice mails being responded to, full mail boxes being emptied and calls returned.**

**Recommendation 25**

**Residents’ suggestions should be recorded to provide baselines for monitoring and enable progress to be demonstrated.**

**Recommendation 26**

**Joined up working should be encouraged at all levels. This should involve LHM working closely with other areas of the council as well as other housing providers, community/ voluntary groups and partners such as the borough police, to ensure residents receive as coherent, consistent and cost effective a service as possible; for example, effectively developing a shared strategic vision and response to anti-social behaviour.**

**Recommendation 27**

**LHM should follow all relevant recommendations contained within the July 2015 Community Engagement Cabinet Review conducted by the Deputy Cabinet Member for Community Engagement and Customer Access (and the associated toolkit).**

(<http://www.lambeth.gov.uk/elections-and-council/about-lambeth/lambeths-community-engagement-toolkit-2015> )

## Section 7: Mechanisms and Structures

The Commission appreciates that LHM are looking at reforming the current resident involvement structures and does not wish to be too prescriptive in terms of recommending what any new mechanisms should look like; however, some general suggestions are made with regards to possible structures that could help improve resident involvement in line with the principles outlined in Section 1.

### Resident Involvement in Lambeth: the Current Picture

The established structure of resident involvement in Lambeth consists of:

Tenants' and Residents' Associations (TRAs): The most basic level of organised resident involvement in Lambeth, TRAs are organisations set up to represent the interests of a group of residents in a particular local area – usually an estate. There are over 80 such associations operating in the borough, covering around 60% of properties.

Area housing forums / area leasehold forums: These forums – covering six geographical areas of the borough (North Lambeth, Stockwell & Vassall, Brixton, Clapham, Streatham and Norwood) – are made up of representatives from TRAs in the area concerned (though they are open to any resident) and generally meet quarterly to discuss performance and other issues. They act as the main area consultative body for tenants and leaseholders respectively.

Tenants' Council / Leaseholders' Council: These are the overarching borough-wide strategic consultative groups and consist of elected representatives from the area forums.

The principal document devised to govern the relationship between the Council and residents in terms of engagement is the Resident Participation Compact. This was produced in 2012 and sets out a number of commitments to support resident involvement. However, the second annual Compact review, carried out in 2014, acknowledges that there are a number of areas for improvement, among them the lack of appropriate officers and Tenants' and Leaseholders' Council meetings, the follow-up of actions from meetings, low take-up of training opportunities and lack of training needs analysis, and limited efforts having been made to engage with young people.

The results of the Future Model survey clearly indicated that knowledge of, and interest in, these existing mechanisms were at a fairly low level, and that those who did participate often failed to see any meaningful action result from their endeavours.

### The Lambeth 500+

Set up since the Future Model survey was carried out, the Lambeth 500+ is a consultative group which is free to join for any resident who receives services from LHM. It is designed to be a flexible mechanism in which residents can participate as much or as little as they like. Among the areas planned to be looked into by the Lambeth 500+ are KPIs, antisocial behaviour and resident wellbeing.

### The Camden Model

As part of its evidence gathering the Commission heard from the Housing Service Development Manager and the Head of Tenant and Leaseholder Engagement at the London Borough of Camden. Camden's stock profile is similar to Lambeth's and tenant activism has a rich history in the borough. Their housing management function was brought in house in

2012 and this gave rise to a broadened engagement strategy which included investment in TRA halls to make them more vibrant, setting up scrutiny committees with independent members and developing the roles of the existing formal mechanisms. The engagement structure is centred on 104 TRAs and five District Management Committees (DMCs), each of which oversees a specific neighbourhood area; the Cabinet Member attends all five of these and reflects their views back to Cabinet. DMCs have devolved budgets to spend on things such as environmental improvements, tenant hall upkeep and social activities, and this is seen to work well as it empowers residents. They also have agenda setting meetings and are supported by committee clerks, meaning constitutions, meeting arrangements, agendas, reports and minutes are dealt with professionally. Major policies and strategies go to all five DMCs, Overview & Scrutiny and Cabinet as a matter of course; this allows for bi-directional policy development. The chairs also meet the Cabinet Member quarterly to discuss agenda setting and priorities. Many TRA members have become councillors over the years and councillor involvement is an important part of the structure. Scrutiny panels also operate, with residents themselves largely deciding what to scrutinise, though care is taken to ensure the subject is of adequate importance, sufficiently targeted, timely and not duplicating current work.

### The Future of Resident Involvement in Lambeth

As outlined in Section 1, the Commission envisages a variety of structures to facilitate resident involvement. This is in keeping with the regulatory standards as well as being reflective of the various best practice examples identified by the Commission, and of local appetite as highlighted in the Future Model survey. These should include fixed and flexible structures, each at a range of levels.

#### Fixed Structures

The Commission sees TRAs as the bedrock of resident involvement and would like to see these supported and strengthened as they offer a convenient local entry point for the majority of residents. One issue which came to light during the evidence-gathering is that some small estates and street properties are not covered by TRAs and therefore the Commission recommends that these be either linked in with existing local TRAs or joined together to create a new association. There should also be area structures with some form of devolved responsibility and/or budget in order that residents feel sufficiently empowered to make a difference (this was a recurring theme of residents' feedback at the public meeting). These could potentially be based on the five neighbourhood structure which operates in Lambeth under which each area has a Councillor lead to help coordinate activity. Some form of borough-wide mechanism providing a strategic overview may well also be appropriate, though it is questionable from the examples we have seen whether separating these on the basis of tenure, as is currently the case, is either necessary or constructive. One key learning point from the Camden example above, as well as those cited by Engage Associates in our evidence session and the case studies from the Centre for Public Scrutiny report, is that a certain level of formality and professionalism is beneficial in terms of operational arrangements. This applies to administration and reporting arrangements to ensure the right information is made available at the right time in a professional manner, as well as ensuing meeting agendas are appropriately focused and relevant officers attend.

#### Flexible Structures

The Commission is pleased to note with the introduction of the Lambeth 500+ that flexible structures are becoming a more integral part of how resident involvement operates in Lambeth, though residents at our public meeting queried whether the people who make up this group are sufficiently diverse to be representative of Lambeth's tenant and leaseholder population and the Commission is keen that this be properly considered. Notwithstanding

this, the way in which the Lambeth 500+ plans to operate, with themed reviews in which residents play a key role, is broadly in keeping with the best practice identified (most of which refers to “scrutiny panels”). It is, however, important that flexible structures adhere to the principles outlined above in relation to formality and professionalism; further, they should have sufficient power to effect real change and as such there should be a commitment that the outcomes of panel reviews be formally reported and responded to, as well as being published on the LHM website, and recommendations subsequently monitored. The evidence from Engage Associates, who help set up scrutiny panels, is that such bodies are a powerful forum through which to make evidence-led changes to services as long as these points are adhered to. It is also important that the topics chosen are identified by residents – this could range from local issues, to procurement and contracts, to more fundamental scrutiny of performance – and that timelines and scope are clearly defined. The recommendations on training contained with Section 2 are highly relevant here.

All structures should be democratic and inclusive, though care also needs to be taken to ensure they are representative; to this end it could be the case that appointment rather than election of delegates may be appropriate in some circumstances in order to address equalities issues. This could include young people, those who do not speak good English and people with disabilities.

#### **Recommendation 28**

**There should be a variety of involvement structures, both fixed and flexible, to accommodate the skills, needs and appetite of a wide range of residents. These could be existing or new and might include:**

- **The “Lambeth 500+” scheme that seeks to identify residents willing to get involved for short-term and long-term problem solving should be monitored and reviewed to make sure it is representative of all residents**
- **Tenants’ and Residents’ Associations (TRAs): these should be supported and promoted**
- **TRAs should be extended to street properties and small estates (either connected virtually or linked in with other local TRAs)**
- **Area structures, which would have devolved powers in terms of agenda setting and possibly budgets/grants. It would be beneficial for these groups to have links with existing structures to ensure good use of resources (for example, the five-neighbourhood structure where each neighbourhood has a lead councillor who acts as a coordinator)**
- **Borough-wide mechanisms for communication to be considered and co-produced if necessary**
- **Councillors and independent co-optees with expertise should be on scrutiny panels if required.**

**A range of structures should be considered including borough-wide or area-based, and/or linked with other strategic bodies. All structures should be democratic.**

#### **Recommendation 29**

**Links should be developed with residents in housing associations for the purpose of sharing good practice and training (i.e. widening of the TRA network, scrutiny training).**

**Recommendation 30**

The commission envisages levels of involvement as follows:

- **Level 0**: communication and access to information in a regular and accessible form
- **Level 1**: involvement at a local level (e.g. in a TRA), including becoming a chair or treasurer, or participation in a local working group
- **Level 2**: involvement in a time-limited task and finish group looking at a specific issue (e.g. selection of contractors, repairs, complaints, and procurement processes). These may be borough-wide or area-based and should co-produce outcomes that are then responded to by relevant housing managers and/or Councillors
- **Level 3**: involvement in scrutiny, policy reviews and performance management, borough-wide and/or area-based.

## Section 8: Estate Regeneration

The Commission acknowledges that there are severe pressures on social housing in Lambeth, with over 21,000 people currently on our waiting list for a Council home, and there is a necessity to increase stock, both to try to alleviate these pressures and also to reduce costs in relation to temporary accommodation. It is therefore vital that where estates can be regenerated to provide extra housing, this should be a priority. This may be a combination of demolition, infill and redevelopment; every scheme will be different depending on the nature of the land. Whichever approach is taken, it is imperative that residents should play a central role in determining what is best for their estate.

It is accepted that estate regeneration is a live issue across London and the country more widely – indeed it was the subject of a [speech](#) by the Prime Minister in January 2016 – and is often controversial. It is a particularly stressful process for residents and one in which best practice needs to be followed. The Commission would like to ensure that past mistakes are not repeated in Lambeth and, following an evidence-gathering process including officers, residents and experts, its recommendations are outlined below to act as a blueprint for how residents can be involved in estate regeneration processes which affect them so profoundly, thus leading to greater cooperation and better outcomes.

In October 2012 the Cabinet report “Lambeth Estate Regeneration Programme: Strategic Delivery Approach” outlined the criteria that would be used to decide which estates would be prioritised for redevelopment. It was stated that the Council intended:

- to focus on those housing estates where the costs of delivering the Lambeth Housing Standard are prohibitive and / or;
- where residents and the Council have identified that the Lambeth Housing Standard works in themselves will neither address the fundamental condition of the properties nor address many of the wider social and economic issues experienced by residents and / or;
- to focus on those estates where the wider benefits arising from regeneration justify the intervention.

Based on this, six estates were earmarked – Cressingham Gardens, Knight’s Walk, South Lambeth, Westbury, Central Hill and Fenwick – and work is progressing on these regeneration projects at varying rates. Comments were sought from residents of these estates on the draft recommendations in order that they could be taken on board prior to finalisation. Detailed, considered responses were received from five different estates and these were used to shape the final outcome.

### Placing Residents at the Centre of the Service

In keeping with the principles outlined elsewhere in this report it is essential that residents be placed at the centre of the estate regeneration process at all stages if it is to work effectively – from initial ideas and exploration of options through to planning, design, building, agreement of contracts and monitoring. A recurring theme of the evidence taken was that trust between residents and the Council could break down very quickly if regeneration plans did not get off to a positive start, and this can only be achieved by open, honest dialogue from the outset. The GLA Housing Committee’s February 2015 report “Knock it Down or Do it Up? The challenge of estate regeneration” cites Andover Estate and King’s Square, both in Islington, and Copley Close in Ealing, as examples where this has been done well; in all of these cases, involving residents in a variety of aspects was seen as the key to the success of the schemes. The Commission acknowledges that this is improving in Lambeth, and is pleased to see the draft principles for estate regeneration and the key guarantees that are

now in operation. The draft principles have been shaped by councillors and residents and form a starting point for discussions, being developed further into a bespoke final document for each estate, while the key guarantees set out what existing tenants and homeowners can expect following the completion of each regeneration. Resident Engagement Panels (REPs) are also being set up as a mechanism for people to engage with the Council, ensuring appropriate representation among the residents most affected. However, the Commission believes knowledge management could be improved to make sure learning is captured and shared effectively and processes are thus strengthened with each new project that takes place. This could be via forums, debriefs or other means but residents should have the confidence that when mistakes are made on one scheme they are not repeated on another. It is essential too that thorough research is carried out in relation to the area concerned prior to embarking upon a regeneration in order that officers are fully sighted in relation to the history and circumstances of the locality, and are thus adequately prepared for questions or concerns they may encounter.

As outlined in Section 2, appropriate training is a key aspect of ensuring people are properly equipped to become involved, and this is no different for estate regeneration. Feedback from the residents we heard from cited the need for effective chairing of meetings in particular; this includes skills such as encouraging contributions and debate, ensuring clarity regarding agreed actions and timelines, and handling conflict. It is also important that anyone involved in REPs be trained according to their role in order that they can all participate on an equal footing. REPs need to be based on the tenure split on the estate for fairness, though feedback from our consultation on the draft recommendations was that flexibility was required here in order to ensure residents were not excluded from involvement based purely on tenure. As a result of the complexities – including financial and legal issues – involved in estate regeneration, it was also suggested at our estate regeneration themed meeting that independent advisors be appointed to REPs in order to support the process and the Commission agrees that this would be beneficial in helping to support residents appropriately while upholding integrity and professionalism.

### Effective Decision Making Processes

One of the keys to securing residents' confidence and backing when conducting estate regeneration projects is having sufficiently robust processes for making decisions. As the GLA Housing Committee report points out, the bedrock of this is to ensure clarity on the fundamentals of each scheme and this chimes with the views of residents and experts we heard from; if there is transparency around the purpose of the regeneration and the overall strategy, it will be much easier to get residents on board. There must also be consistency in decision making and a proper evidence base for decisions. This will often start with an options appraisal setting out the condition of the stock and various other analyses including financial modelling, costs and benefits, and other assumptions. In order for this to be accepted by residents it must be widely publicised and should include consideration of social and environmental issues, acknowledging that these are difficult to measure. It is also clear, as discussed earlier, that any scheme will be difficult to progress if it does not command an appropriate degree of support from residents living on the estate and to this end it is recommended that a test of opinion of estate residents should be undertaken to help evidence the final decision. This should be independent in order that it cannot be open to accusations of bias, and must help inform the final proposals. Clarity over timetables is another important issue. It is recognised that estate regeneration is never going to be a quick process and that a number of factors need to be considered, many of which are not directly in the control of the housing provider. However, while the draft principles do include a commitment to be "clear about the timescales involved", this needs to go further, with reasons given for any slippage.

## Communications and Consultation

It was explained in our evidence session that more resources are now being committed to communications in connection with estate regeneration and this is to be welcomed. We heard from officers that a dedicated team was being set up for each estate, overseen by a Communications and Engagement Manager. The Commission firmly believes that proper communications plans are crucial and that these must be devised and delivered by professionals in the field rather than added on to the workload of other officers working in regeneration more generally. In the spirit of co-production, these should be agreed with the REP at the outset, though it is also important to review the plans regularly to make sure they are fit for purpose and identify whether any changes are needed as the scheme progresses. Residents we heard from cited effective communication as essential and warned how a lack of clear information can erode trust or create a void which rumour and conjecture is often only too ready to fill.

The independent chair of one of the REPs, who had experienced some problems with provision of information previously, set out to us the key principles which he believed need to be borne in mind at all times in relation to communications: timeliness, accuracy and professionalism. If residents are communicated with regularly and the information they receive is consistent and accurate, they are more likely to be supportive, or at least accepting, of the decisions made than if they feel they have not been fully informed. Communications must also be two-way, enabling regular feedback through whatever means are most appropriate for residents to ensure that their questions are logged and responded to. It must also be recognised that it is more difficult for some residents to access, comprehend and respond to communications than others. This could be for a variety of factors, including lifestyle, language or disability, and this has to be borne in mind to ensure the more vulnerable residents do not lose out. The Commission therefore recommends that targeted personal contact – via whatever means is deemed most appropriate in the individual circumstances – be considered in such cases.

Consultation must also adhere to a number of core basic principles to be valid and constructive, including transparency and inclusivity as outlined above. We heard from a REP chair that there had been an apparent reluctance to share documentation in the past and, in keeping with much of the rest of the Commission's findings, it is recommended that all relevant documentation should be made readily available to residents, in a variety of formats, in order that they are as well-informed as possible and, once again, to foster trust. In relation to surveys or tests of opinion, residents at our meeting expressed concern that these had not always felt very cooperative in the past and there had also been problems with the level of detail required in the responses, with some requiring essay-like answers, giving rise to questionable results. The Commission accepts this and recommends that surveys should be not only co-produced but also piloted in order that an assessment can be made as to whether they are user friendly and fit for purpose. The knowledge and expertise of ward councillors should also be fully utilised as they are often best placed to provide insight into the communities they serve while also being able to convey to residents the imperatives of the Council's situation in terms of the social housing shortage.

## Building and Design

Although making the decision on what option to take for a particular estate regeneration scheme may often feel to the Council like the most fundamental hurdle to overcome, for residents the look and feel of their new residence and wider environment will be equally, if not more, important. Resident involvement in building and design aspects is therefore key when it comes to maintaining a positive relationship as the process progresses. It was noted earlier that regeneration is prioritised for estates where carrying out improvement works is either assessed as being too expensive or insufficient; therefore improving the quality of the

built environment must be a key aim for any regeneration. Further, this needs to be demonstrable to residents. Feedback we received cited the necessity to consult widely on building standards, using the principles outlined above. Furthermore, these must be strictly adhered to once agreed, and having a resident feedback mechanism on building standards should be an integral part of evidencing this.

In terms of design, we heard in our evidence session of positive experiences with regards to involving the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) in workshops engaging with residents on design options and it is recommended that such initiatives continue. Visual exhibitions and possibly estate visits can also help to give residents a real life view of what to expect when their regeneration goes ahead, and give people a better idea of how particular building and design elements look in a real world setting.

A final point here which emerged during our evidence session is that planned regeneration of a particular estate does not currently appear on the property register and this meant some people had bought flats at a late stage prior to redevelopment without being aware of the situation. The Commission recognises that this is a major issue for potential homebuyers and recommends that the property register be updated to reflect this each time a regeneration scheme is approved.

### Contracts

The Commission heard from residents of Myatt's Field North, which underwent regeneration several years ago under a Private Finance Initiative (PFI) scheme, as well as a lecturer in critical urban geography who had carried out research on the estate. They told us that resident involvement had become very difficult and conflictual under the PFI contract as so many elements had been set in stone contractually for a long period, and that they felt there was a lack of accountability since Lambeth had handed over control of the regeneration to a series of companies. It is acknowledged that officers understand there were problems at Myatt's Field and it is accepted that estate regeneration is done very differently today than it was in this case, with the Council playing a bigger role and committing to taking the project at least up to the planning application stage. Nonetheless, the Commission is keen to ensure Lambeth takes clear ownership of any future PFI projects in order to reduce uncertainty and confusion for residents. As we have seen from the Copley Close example, retention of ownership by the Council was a key element in the success of the project.

We also return here to the issue of openness and transparency, which as discussed elsewhere in this report are vital to gain residents' trust. It was reported that the PFI contracts at Myatt's Field were very difficult for residents to get to the bottom of as they were very opaque, with little or no commitment being made to ensure they were accessible for residents to scrutinise, again leading to frustrations and conflict. It is clear that, for resident involvement to work, all relevant documentation must be opened up for residents to explore, and that this must be done in a timely manner to enable them to have real influence. It is also the case that long term contracts of any kind by their very nature reduce resident choice and this could have an impact on value for money, with utilities contracts being cited by residents we spoke to.

### Equalities

The Council, in common with other public bodies, operates in accordance with the public sector equality duty, which requires it to advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations, between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not. There are nine protected characteristics outlined in the Equality Act: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex, and sexual orientation. The Commission recognises that Lambeth is a

hugely diverse borough and also that estate regeneration is likely to disproportionately affect residents with protected characteristics; therefore adequate consideration of equalities impacts is paramount when it comes to resident involvement.

Equalities Impact Assessments (EIAs) are the means by which the potential consequences of a decision for residents with protected characteristics are systematically assessed, and mitigations proposed, in order to ensure that a particular policy or decision does what it is intended to do and complies with the public sector equality duty. While these are carried out as a matter of course at the outset of most policy initiatives and processes, the Commission is concerned that EIA action plans are not always updated and monitored effectively enough, and for a process as long and complex as estate regeneration this poses risks that equalities issues are not sufficiently addressed throughout the lifetime of the scheme. It is therefore recommended that EIA action plans are reviewed regularly to address any emerging concerns. In keeping with the principles espoused by the rest of this report it is suggested that residents and other interested parties, such as developers and contractors, are involved in this process.

### ***Estate Regeneration***

*Placing residents at the centre of the service*

#### **Recommendation 31**

**Placing residents at the centre of the regeneration process should be the focus at all stages including consultation, design, building and contract management.**

#### **Recommendation 32**

**Before starting a regeneration process officers and members should research and review the history and decision-making related to the area concerned, including neighbourhood plans, and visit if necessary. This research should include reviewing lessons learned from previous projects in order that relevant learning can be applied.**

#### **Recommendation 33**

**Roles and responsibilities of officers, councillors and residents should be clear from the beginning. Related training should be mandatory for those involved in resident engagement panels in each stage of the process.**

#### **Recommendation 34**

**Focus groups/resident engagement panels should reflect the tenure split on the estate to allow differences to be discussed between different groups of tenants, leaseholders and freeholders.**

#### **Recommendation 35**

**Independent advisors should be appointed to resident engagement panels and be available for groups.**

#### **Recommendation 36**

**Those running meetings should be trained and skilled in all areas of chairing, including recognising and handling conflict.**

**Recommendation 37**

Robust knowledge management processes should be put in place. This should include mechanisms for sharing experiences across estates and debriefs at the end of each stage of the regeneration involving officers, residents and other key stakeholders.

**Recommendation 38**

The recommendations of the London Assembly Housing Committee report “Knock It Down or Do It Up: The Challenge of Estate Regeneration” should be followed, particularly the first two recommendations on effective decision making processes (these are included as recommendations 39 and 40 below).

*Effective Decision Making Processes*

**Recommendation 39**

The Council should be robust by being clear from the outset on the purpose of the proposed regeneration and how it fits within a broader strategy for the local area and borough, communicating this early, openly and broadly, and ensuring a systematic and objective option appraisal is undertaken and published.

**Recommendation 40**

The Council should include in its option appraisal effective consideration of medium- to long-term social and environmental issues. This would incorporate an assessment of the lifecycle carbon impacts of options and feature existing residents’ needs and wishes in terms of their lived experience, in tandem with the wider strategic and financial imperatives. It would be clear how residents’ views have been taken into account.

**Recommendation 41**

The Council should have fully justified any regeneration proposal. An independent test of opinion of estate residents should be undertaken which would help inform any final proposals.

**Recommendation 42**

The Council should ensure that homeowners are treated fairly and enable them to access an independent valuer to facilitate fair recompense for their properties. The starting point should be that homeowners are offered a like-for-like replacement of their property, or a similar offer, wherever possible.

**Recommendation 43**

Clear timetables need to be given, with reasons for any slippage.

*Communications*

**Recommendation 44**

A communication plan devised and delivered by professionals in the field should be developed for all phases of the regeneration process. This should be agreed with the resident engagement panel at the outset and reviewed regularly.

**Recommendation 45**

Communication should be two-way between the Council and residents and enable feedback to be widely disseminated through a variety of means.

**Recommendation 46**

Communications need to be clear, consistent, regular, accurate and professional. Residents need to be kept informed by way of a range of means to suit their needs. For the most vulnerable, this could include targeted personal contact.

**Recommendation 47**

Due regard should be paid to the Equality Act 2010 in consultation and communication. This should be reviewed regularly to ensure equalities issues are being addressed.

**Recommendation 48**

Business processes to log questions and respond in a timely manner should be developed and communicated in a variety of ways

*Consultation*

**Recommendation 49**

Ward councillors should be used as a link to residents as they are likely to recognise the impact of regeneration on their areas.

**Recommendation 50**

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) produced by the Council's Estate Regeneration Team should be prepared to be included with news communicated at each stage of the regeneration process.

**Recommendation 51**

Consultation with tenants, leaseholders and freeholders should be transparent and inclusive. Relevant documentation should be made available in a variety of formats. This should be co-produced.

**Recommendation 52**

Surveys should be co-produced and piloted in order to ensure that questions are relevant and clearly put.

*Design*

**Recommendation 53**

Professional companies such as the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) should be engaged to work with residents on possible designs and the master planning process.

**Recommendation 54**

Visual exhibitions should be developed to help explain processes. These should be developed over the life of the project and on permanent display locally.

**Recommendation 55**

Visits to estates to look at relevant regeneration projects should be built in to the timetable at each stage of the process

*Building*

**Recommendation 56**

All estate regeneration projects should seek to improve the quality of homes and the built environment

**Recommendation 57**

Once it has been agreed to carry out regeneration on an estate, this should be noted on the property register

**Recommendation 58**

Building standards should be consulted on, communicated widely and strictly adhered to. Feedback mechanisms on the quality of homes should also be initiated from the inception of the building phase.

**Recommendation 59**

Site tours should be held to comparable schemes in other boroughs, enabling people to visualise real spaces rather than just drawings and models

*Contracts*

**Recommendation 60**

Contracts and other related documentation should be open and accessible for residents to discuss and scrutinise in a timely manner.

**Recommendation 61**

PFI schemes should be subject to extra safeguards including:

- Lambeth taking clear ownership of the project
- Long utilities contracts being examined closely for potential benefits

*Equalities*

**Recommendation 62**

Equalities Impact Assessments (EIAs) are integral to all regeneration processes. The guidance, and support, of the Council's Equalities Team needs to be sought at the beginning through to completion of regeneration projects. The EIA action plan will seek to address the disproportionate impact of regeneration upon people who hold multiple protected characteristics. These action plans need to be monitored and reported on regularly, whilst being flexible enough to identify and address any unknown consequences. The EIA action plan should be developed and reviewed in collaboration with residents, council officers, developers and contractors.

## Annex 1: Acknowledgements

The Commission would like to thank all those who have contributed to its work over the last several months, in particular the local residents, expert witnesses and others who have submitted evidence and given up their time to attend meetings:

Petra Abbam (resident), Peter Adams (Resident Engagement Officer, Community Trust Housing), Risq Aminasaun (Chair, South Area Housing Forum), Tina Anderson (resident), Graeme Beedham (Head of Tenant and Leaseholder Engagement, London Borough of Camden), Janet Benjamin (resident), Cllr Matthew Bennett (Cabinet Member for Housing (LBL)), Katie Bond (Director of Home Ownership, Notting Hill Housing Trust), Barbara Booth (resident), Cllr Tim Briggs (Leader of Majority Opposition Group (LBL)), Tina Bull (Head of Service Improvement (LHM)), Faisal Butt (former Lambeth Living Board member and Housing Service Development Manager at London Borough of Camden), Tom Copley AM (Chair, London Assembly Housing Committee), Rev Jonathan Croucher (Independent Chair, Central Hill Estate Resident Engagement Panel), Idoya D'Cruze (South Area Housing Manager (LHM)), Kate Dodsworth (Executive Director, People & Strategy, AmicusHorizon), Natasha Fearon (Head of Operations, Ekaya), Sandra Ferguson (resident), Cllr Annie Gallop (LBL), Gerlinde Gniewosz (resident), Nicholas Greaves (resident), Mandy Green (Associate Director, Commissioning (LBL)), Cllr Nigel Haselden (LBL), Victor Hernandez (resident), Dr Stuart Hodgkinson (Lecturer in Critical Urban Geography, University of Leeds), Ron Hollis (resident), Mark Howarth (Governance and Resident Engagement Manager (LHM)), Kevin Johnson (resident), Liam Kelly (Resident Participation Officer (LHM)), Marjorie Landels (resident), Shemi Leira (resident), Dr Tony Manzi (Principal Lecturer, Faculty of Architecture and the Built Environment, University of Westminster), Viv Moriarty (resident), Tim Morton (Engage Associates), Jemma Moulard (Research Analyst, Family Mosaic), Mariana Nwagboso (resident), Uzoamaka Okafor (resident), Helen O'Malley (resident and former councillor), Lynette Peters (Lead Commissioner (LBL)), Margaret Pierre-Jarrett (High Trees Community Development Trust), Rachel Sharpe (Commissioning Director (LBL)), Michael Simms (Adviser, Tenant Participation and Advisory Service (TPAS)), Paul Simpson (Communications and Engagement Manager (LBL)), Sebastian Taylor (Head of Customer Experience, Phoenix Community Housing), Jackie Thomas (Business Improvement Manager, Notting Hill Housing Trust), Brian Trainor (Head of Housing Services, Coin Street Community Builders), Michael Turner (resident), Tom Tyson (Strategy and Policy Manager (LBL)), Mary van der Water (resident), Neil Vokes (Programme Director, Strategic Capital Programmes (LBL)), Dr Paul Watt (Reader in Urban Studies, Birkbeck College), John Webb (resident), Emily Wester (Leaseholder Community Engagement Officer (LHM)), Neil Wightman (Director LHM).

Particular thanks go to the three resident co-optees – Jennifer Thomas, Malcolm Baker and Melissa Madjitey – for their valuable insight and commitment.

## Annex 2: Commission Timeline

16 April 2015	<p><b>Commission Session 1</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introductory and question and answer session with Cabinet Member for Housing and Commissioning Director.</li> <li>• Agreement of commission scope and outline future meeting arrangements</li> </ul>
2 June 2015	<p><b>Commission Session 2</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reporting back of initial research carried out by commission members; discussion of key documents obtained via desk-based research</li> </ul>
18 June 2015	<p><b>Commission Session 3</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appointment of co-optees and identification of proposed meeting themes / key contributors</li> </ul>
20 July 2015	<p><b>Commission Session 4</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contributor session 1 – a number of contributors with experience and/or expertise in resident involvement were invited to an evidence-gathering session of the commission, including Lambeth officers, representatives from housing associations, local practitioners and a university lecturer in housing management practice</li> </ul>
30 July 2015	<p><b>Commission Session 5</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contributor session 2 – a further session with Lambeth officers and expert witnesses including a consultant and trainer in resident involvement methods, a representative of national best practice body TPAS (Tenant Participation and Advisory Service), senior housing officers from the London Borough of Camden (including one former Lambeth Living Board member) and housing association representatives</li> </ul>
2 September 2015	<p><b>Commission Session 6</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commission meeting to discuss findings and agree outline conclusions and recommendations</li> </ul>
6 October 2015	<p><b>Commission Session 7 – public consultation meeting</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public meeting: round table sessions to gather feedback on draft recommendations prior to their finalisation (in addition to which, consultation was carried out with existing tenant and leaseholder representatives, via local councillors, at area forum and TRA network meetings, via social media and by way of an online survey)</li> </ul>
22 October 2015	<p><b>Commission Session 8</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contributor session dedicated to estate regeneration including among attendees the London Assembly Housing Committee chair, a university lecturer in critical urban geography and local residents as well as Lambeth officers</li> </ul>

27 October 2015	<p><b>Commission Session 9</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meeting of commission members to discuss findings from 22 Oct regeneration session and agree outline conclusions and recommendations on this theme</li> </ul>
Oct-Nov 2015	<p><i>Consultation on draft recommendations (minus estate regeneration)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recommendations and cover report sent to existing contacts on area forums, Tenants' Council and Leaseholders' Council, and TRA Network</li> <li>• 26 October to 2 November: online survey conducted on draft recommendations, publicised via the above contacts and Democratic Services twitter feed. 42 responses received</li> </ul>
November 2015	<p><i>Recommendations finalised</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recommendations (minus estate regeneration) finalised, taking into account feedback received via the various consultation mechanisms outlined</li> </ul>
9 December 2015	<p><i>Overview and Scrutiny report</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Update report on the work of the commission to Overview and Scrutiny Committee (including final recommendations minus regeneration theme)</li> </ul>
December 2015	<p><i>Consultation on draft estate regeneration recommendations</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Targeted email consultation with resident engagement panel members on draft estate regeneration recommendations.</li> <li>• 34 people targeted; five detailed responses received representing five of the six estates</li> </ul>
January 2016	<p><i>Estate Regeneration recommendations</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recommendations on estate regeneration finalised taking into account feedback received</li> </ul>
3 February 2016	<p><i>Department notified of findings</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cabinet Member and senior officers notified of final recommendations of the commission in order that action plan could begin to be drawn up</li> </ul>
16 February 2016	<p><b>Commission Session 10</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meeting of commission members to discuss and agree final commission report</li> </ul>
19 February 2016	<p><i>Department notified of final report</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Final commission report circulated to Cabinet Member and senior officers prior to publication and comments sought regarding factual accuracy</li> </ul>
15 March 2016	<p><i>Report publication</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Final commission report published on Overview and Scrutiny agenda</li> </ul>
23 March 2016	<p><i>Overview and Scrutiny report</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Final commission report formally received by Overview and Scrutiny Committee</li> </ul>

March 2016	<p><i>Housing Associations notified of findings</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Final commission report circulated to Housing Associations with stock in the borough</li> </ul>
29 April 2016	<p><i>Publication of action plan</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commission report and action plan published on Cabinet agenda</li> </ul>
9 May 2016	<p><i>Report to Cabinet</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consideration/approval of commission report and action plan by Cabinet</li> </ul>
November 2016	<p><i>Six month update</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Update of progress against action plan (format to be decided)</li> </ul>
May 2017	<p><i>Twelve month update</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Update of progress against action plan (format to be decided)</li> </ul>

### Annex 3: Background Documents

LB Lambeth [Community Plan 2013-16](#)

LB Lambeth [The Cooperative Council: A new settlement between citizens and public services, a new approach to public service delivery](#) (May 2010)

LB Lambeth [The Co-operative Council: Sharing power: A new settlement between citizens and the state](#) (January 2011)

LB Lambeth [Behaviours for the Cooperative Council](#) (January 2013)

LB Lambeth Cabinet report 14/15-175: [Lambeth Housing Management Services](#) (April 2015)

LB Lambeth [Community Engagement Toolkit](#) (2015)

Lambeth Living Getting Involved; [Resident Engagement Strategy 2013-14](#) (2013)

Lambeth Living [Resident Participation Compact](#) (April 2012)

Lambeth Living [Resident Participation Compact Review](#) (July 2014)

Lambeth Living [Survey of Tenants and Residents \(STAR\)](#) (2014)

Lambeth Living [Delivery Plan 2014-15](#) (2015)

Centre for Public Scrutiny [Tenant Scrutiny Policy Briefing](#) and [Case Studies](#) (March 2012)

Tenants Leading Change [An Investment Not a Cost: The Business Benefits of Tenant Involvement](#) (March 2015)

University of Westminster / AmicusHorizon [Success, Satisfaction & Scrutiny: The Business Benefits of Involving Residents](#) (2014) and associated [Resident Engagement Toolkit](#) (2015)

Tenant Participation Advisory Service [Resident Involvement Accreditation for Landlords](#)  
[Localism Act 2011](#)

Homes and Communities Agency [Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard](#) (2012)

Homes and Communities Agency [Regulating the Standards](#) (2015)

Professor Martin Cave [Every Tenant Matters: A review of social housing regulation](#) (2007)

London Assembly Housing Committee [Knock It Down or Do It Up: The Challenge of Estate Regeneration](#) (2015)

LB Lambeth Cabinet report 132/12-13: [Lambeth Estate Regeneration Programme: Strategic Delivery Approach](#) (Oct 2012)

LB Lambeth [Draft Principles for Estate Regeneration](#) (2015)

LB Lambeth [Estate Regeneration: Key Guarantees](#) (2015)