

Report Title: Resident Involvement Strategy and Resident Involvement Agreement

Report of: **Interim Director of Social Services and Housing**

Wards(s) affected: **All**

Report for: **Key Decision**

1. Purpose

- 1.1 To obtain approval of the Resident Involvement Agreement and Resident Involvement Strategy

2. Introduction by Executive Member

- 2.1 This is the latest review of the Agreement (it will be reviewed annually to ensure that it is continuously refined in the light of experience on the ground, feedback from service users and changing circumstances).
- 2.2 It has gone through extensive consultation and the process has been driven by service users themselves through the Tenant Compact Review Group and the Tenant Participation Panel.
- 2.3 The final version will be once more filtered through a plain English audit to ensure that it is "crystal marked" for easy-read status.
- 2.4 The agreement will complement the parallel development of the wider participation mechanisms that housing is working and consulting on, following the in principle approval of the EAB (through Neighbourhood Assemblies and the proposed Strategic Housing Board). These would enable council tenants and leaseholders to participate in the wider decisions that affect their lives (especially issues of inter-agency strategy, homelessness and the procurement of new social housing), as well as other non-council tenant users of the housing service to be involved in cross-sector housing strategic issues.

3. Recommendation

- 3.1 Agrees the principles set out in the Resident Involvement Agreement and Resident Involvement Strategy (Appendix A)
- 3.2 Agrees that a summary Resident Involvement Agreement (Compact) will be produced

3.3 Agrees to the Resident Involvement Agreement (Compact) being launched in March 2007 subject to agreement by the council.

Report authorised by :

Jim Crook

Interim Director of Social Services and Housing

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4. Executive Summary

- 4.1 Since 1999, the government has required all local authorities to have a tenant participation compact in place. This must follow government guidance in the *National Framework for Tenant Participation Compacts*.
- 4.2 The document is not short. However, it aims to be comprehensive. Other compacts that have been cited as best practice have been of a similar length. It is intended that it will be produced in a ring-binder folder with index tabs, so that revisions can be issued and versions updated.
- 4.3 The full version of the final document will be sent to all involved residents, such as those on panels and groups, residents' associations, advocates, and estate inspectors. It will also be sent to Board members, councillors, and managers in Homes for Haringey and key partners in Haringey Council. Residents will also be encouraged to access the document through the Homes for Haringey website.
- 4.4 A summary leaflet will be produced for all residents, to be distributed with Homes Zone. There is a promotion strategy for both the Resident Involvement Agreement (Compact) and the Strategy.
- 4.5 All documents will be Crystal Marked by the Plain English Campaign and will be given an easy read status.

5. Reasons for any change in policy or for new policy development (if applicable)

- 5.1 This will be the third agreement (or compact) for Haringey, and the first that includes Homes for Haringey, Haringey Council and residents in a three-way partnership.
- 5.2 The previous compacts have had limited success. They were not widely inclusive in their drafting, which resulted in low levels of understanding of their principles and contents, and thus limited 'buy-in' from the partners.
- 5.3 Both the Housing Quality Network mock inspection and the Audit Commission's indicative inspection have highlighted this problem, and a decision was taken to

re-write both the compact and strategy from scratch.

- 5.4 The existing strategy also suffered from being insufficiently known and supported, and was criticised in the Audit Commission.
- 5.5 The new draft strategy aims to consolidate the approaches and priority areas identified over the past two years as a result of listening to residents and taking into account inspection results, Key Lines of Enquiry, staff ideas and best practice.
- 5.6 The strategy's activity plan is based on the resident Involvement activities report presented to the Board on 13 June 2006 and subsequently discussed in detail at the Tenant Participation Panel.

6. Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

- 6.1 HQN Mock Inspection Report
- 6.2 Tenant Agreement 2004
- 6.3 Audit Commission Indicative Inspection Report
- 6.4 Strategy – Board paper on resident involvement 13 June 2006
- 6.5 National Framework for Tenant Participation Compacts
- 6.6 TPAS Resident Involvement Agreement review report

7. Director of Finance Comments

- 7.1 The Director of Finance has been consulted. The costs of producing the Agreement and the Strategy will be £25k and will be funded from budgets identified within the Homes for Haringey budget.

8. Head of Legal Service Comments

- 8.1 The Head of Legal Services has been consulted in the preparation of this report, and makes the following comments.
- 8.2 The need for there to be effective tenant and leaseholder involvement in the way in which Homes for Haringey carries out its management duties on behalf of the Council is written into the management agreement dated 31st March 2006 (see clause 4). Furthermore, Homes for Haringey is obligated to honour the Council's Tenant Compact, and to periodically (annually) review and consult on it.
- 8.3 The Head of Legal Services advises that the draft Resident Involvement Agreement attached to this report meets the obligations on Homes for Haringey under the agreement.

9. Background – How the new Agreement has been produced

- 9.1 In September 2005 a residents' compact group was formed to review the 2004

Tenant Participation Agreement. The group carried out a benchmarking exercises looking at other agreements from a number of London ALMOs including, Westminster, Hounslow, Brent, Hammersmith and Fulham and also reviewed examples of best practice from other organisations including Sheffield Homes and Kirklees Federation of Tenants and Residents Associations.

- 9.2 The compact group and various residents' panels (depending on their area of expertise) have been consulted throughout the process and have been given an opportunity to comment of draft chapters, including overall aims and objectives and monitoring arrangements at different stages in the development process.

10. Consultation carried out

- 10.1 The draft Resident Involvement Agreement and Resident Involvement Strategy was circulated to all involved residents, Homes for Haringey Board members, officers and Councillors for comment.
- 10.2 The following resident groups have been consulted:
- All Homes for Haringey Resident panels (Leaseholders Panel, Tenancy and Estate Management Panel, Repairs Panel, Finance Panel, Communications Panel, Asset Management Panel and Procurement Panel)
 - Members of the Residents' Consultative Forum
 - Turkish Speaking and Kurdish Speaking Forum and the Somali Speaking Forum
 - Stonebridge Youth Group and the New Deal for Communities (NDC) Youth Forum.
- Consultation documents were also sent to 250 non involved residents (residents identified from the recent individual needs survey)
- Community groups (voluntary organisations) on the Resident Involvement Teams community contacts database
- 10.3 Consultation documents have been posted on the Homes for Haringey website.
- 10.4 Overall feedback has been positive and the draft document was well received by all groups. Two special open meetings were arranged for panel members, resident association members and advocates and a workshop was held at the last Residents Consultative Forum (4th October 2006).
- 10.5 Minor improvements have been made to the text where residents have asked for more clarification. Some residents have asked for more detailed information on the election of Homes for Haringey Board Members, however, residents are aware that the agreement sets out the basic principles and understand that the details of the election process are yet to be agreed.

11. Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS) review

- 11.1 TPAS was asked to carry out an assessment of the draft documents. Their report is very positive, they describe the Resident Involvement Agreement review

process as robust and that the wishes of residents had clearly been taken into account.

11.2 TPAS concluded that the new resident involvement agreement is described as a comprehensive document which demonstrates a clear commitment to resident involvement.

11.3 TPAS recommendations have been discussed by the residents' compact group. Many of their recommendations will be incorporated into the finished document.

12. Equality Implications

12.1 People from minority communities and disadvantaged groups are proportionally over-represented in the social housing sector – therefore proposals to promote the ways in which all residents can get involved and the standards they can expect should encourage further participation. The Agreement is likely to enhance their opportunities to influence the services they receive and to address their identified priorities more effectively.

12.2 Consultation has been carried out with the Somali speaking forum and the Turkish Speaking and Kurdish speaking forum. All community groups have been sent both documents for consultation, including the Haringey Women's Forum, the Wheelchair User Group and Wise Thoughts a group for lesbian and gay transgendered people (see appendix c for a full list of community groups).

12.3 Young people have been consulted through the Stonebridge Youth Group and the New Deal for Communities (NDC) Youth Forum.

12.4 Sheltered housing residents have been consulted through the Elderly and Special Needs Forum

12.5 An equalities impact assessment has been carried out and does not negatively impact on any of the six core equality strands.

Appendix 1

Resident Involvement Agreement (Compact) & Resident Involvement Strategy