

HOUSING MANAGEMENT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

Agenda Item 36

Brighton & Hove City Council

Subject: Consultation Draft of Resident Involvement Strategy

Date of Meeting: 27 September 2010

Report of: Acting Director of Housing

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Wards Affected: All

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

- 1.1 This report represents an update on the progress to adopt a revised Resident Involvement Strategy first reported in June 2010.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That committee notes the endorsement of the broad framework of the Resident Involvement Strategy, as proposed by the Tenant Compact Monitoring Group, subject to the continuing work set out below.
- 2.2 That the committee notes that the Tenant Compact Monitoring Group is recommending that the groups, while organised by officers, should be "Tenant/Leaseholders Only" with officers attending only by invitation."
- 2.3 Committee endorses the proposal, from the Tenant Compact Monitoring Group, that four smaller working groups be established to examine, in detail, the consultation responses to the four objectives within the Resident Involvement Strategy, namely:
- **Objective 1** Provide a wide range of opportunities for residents to be involved in their housing.
 - **Objective 2** Develop, a framework for agreeing local offers and priorities with our residents.
 - **Objective 3** Involve residents in the development of housing policy and the design and delivery of housing services.
 - **Objective 4** Involve residents in monitoring and scrutinising our performance in delivering housing services.
- Each working group will examine the comments and suggestions received in the consultation process and will determine what further consultation with all customers might be required.

2.4 The Tenant Compact Monitoring Group is recommending that the groups, while organised by officers, should be “Tenant/Leaseholder Only” with officers attending only by invitation.

3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION/CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS:

3.1.1 At the June Housing Management Consultative Committee a report was proposed outlining the consultation process for the development of the Resident Involvement Strategy. The Tenant Compact Monitoring Group, who were responsible for the strategy, were suggesting a period of consultation prior to reporting back to HMCC at this committee meeting. The timetable for consultation is, again, attached as appendix 1 for your reference.

3.2 The consultation on the new Resident Involvement Strategy was based on the considerable success of the current levels of involvement of residents throughout the City. This success was welcomed by the Audit Commission who, in March 2009, found much to praise in their assessment of customer activity. A summary of the key findings of the Audit Commission were included in the June report. However, the Audit Commission also suggested areas for development that included:

- Developing an overarching resident involvement strategy
- Exploring ways of increasing the diversity of resident involvement as the profile of some tenant representative bodies does not reflect the profile of the community.

3.3 The points made by the Audit Commission were accepted by the Tenant Compact Monitoring Group, on behalf of the tenant movement. As a consequence a Tenant and Leaseholder Involvement Survey was issued to all tenants and leaseholders. The results of the survey were considered by the Tenant Compact Monitoring Group at two workshop meetings held on 24 February and 27 April this year. These workshops were the basis of the Resident Involvement Strategy circulated at June HMCC.

3.4 Since June the consultation process has included:

- Contact being made with all sixty nine Resident and Leaseholder Associations throughout the city.
- The use of the council’s consultation portal on the Brighton & Hove City Council web-site
- The use of the Communities team to contact and consult relevant groups throughout the City
- The use of the Tenant and Leaseholder Involvement Survey to contact those who had expressed an interest in direct Email contact.
- The use of the same survey to contact those who had expressed a willingness to take part in an informal resident group.

4. CONSULTATION

- 4.1 The Tenant Compact Monitoring Group met on 13 August 2010 to consider the large variety of responses received. Having looked at a number of options the TCMG concluded that, while the Resident Involvement Strategy was approved as a broad, strategic framework, further development was needed to ensure that the document remained live and accessible to all who might wish to read it and use it.
- 4.2 It was through this process that the TCMG decided on an approach that would see the creation of four working groups, within the Tenant Compact Monitoring Group, one for each of the objectives. These groups would be able to consider all comments and open itself up to exploring some of the points raised, in more detail, if this seemed appropriate.
- 4.3 The TCMG expressed its desire to be free from officer or councillor influence and are therefore recommending that the working groups should be “Tenant/Leaseholder Only” with officers attending by invitation.

5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

- 5.1 Any costs arising from the consultation process will be met from existing resources within the 2010/11 Housing Revenue Account budget and reported as part of the Targeted Budget Management (TBM) process if necessary. Any financial implications arising from the revised Resident Involvement Strategy will be included as part of a separate report.

*Finance Officer Consulted: Monica Brooks: Principal Accountant
Date: 1st September 2010*

Legal Implications:

- 5.2 Section 105 of the Housing Act 1985 imposes a duty on the Council to maintain appropriate arrangements for informing and involving residents in housing policy. A new Resident Involvement Strategy devised as a result of the consultation process outlined in the report will assist the Council in meeting that duty. It will also help in meeting the TSA’s new “Tenant Involvement and Empowerment” standard. Failure to meet a standard is a ground for the TSA to exercise its extensive range of regulatory powers. It is not considered that any individual’s Human Rights Act rights will be adversely affected by the report’s recommendations.

Lawyer Consulted: Liz Woodley

Date: 14 September 2010

Equalities Implications:

- 5.3 The foundation of the Resident Involvement Strategy is expressed in Objective 1; “Provide a wide range of opportunities for residents to be involved in their housing”. Within this is a guarantee that the new strategy must be all inclusive and open in order to meet its legal obligations. An equalities impact assessment of the final strategy will be produced to underline this point.

Sustainability Implications:

- 5.4 To assist with the Council’s sustainability objectives resource neutral or reduced carbon methods of consultation will be used wherever possible. These will include web-based, internet and Email surveys as well as social media and networking sites

Crime & Disorder Implications:

- 5.5 It is recognised that anti-social behaviour remains a level of concern for residents and their representatives. It is anticipated that the final Resident Involvement Strategy will confirm and develop the role of the recently established Anti-Social Behaviour Working Group.

Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

- 5.6 In any arrangement of engagement it is acknowledged that there will, at times, be conflicting views and the potential for individual rivalries, within or between groups of residents. Within the new strategy it will be important to maintain, as far as possible, that it is for residents themselves to resolve difficulties through their own, local, democratic arrangements. Where difficulties become particularly destructive that they risk the good working of the strategy, individuals will be encouraged to use the facilities of independent mediation services to resolve matters. The final Resident Involvement Strategy will take account of such issues.

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

- 5.7 The final Resident Involvement Strategy will be in line with the principles of the Corporate Engagement Framework and those preparing the final draft will consider the emerging views.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

1. Timetable for consultation

Documents In Members' Rooms

1. None

Background Documents

1. None

