

To	Scrutiny Committee
Date	11/09/2017
Report from	Rob James, Service Director- Housing Transformation
Subject	Tenant Engagement

Report for Scrutiny Committee: Tenant Engagement

Purpose of this Report

To present the case of a review of tenant engagement to the Scrutiny Committee.

Back Ground

Birmingham City Council has a long history of working with tenants and other residents to help deliver and improve services. A key part of this approach has been the tenant led Housing Liaison Board movement, which is celebrating its 25th year. The Council also has a co-regulation duty to work with tenants and leaseholders to review the performance of the service and where needed seek improvement.

The Housing Liaison Board (HLB) Movement has grown and developed into a key mechanism for co-regulation and engagement in Birmingham, with 28 HLBs currently operating across the 10 districts, with members of an average age of over 60. There are other important ways residents can also get involved and be engaged, such as Residents Associations (RAs), Community Groups, Charities, Community Centres and Tenant Halls, Neighbourhood Forums, and block champions. Some tenants are also involved in the management of their own estates through Tenant Management Organisations (TMOs). Birmingham has 5 TMOs;

4 Towers, Bloomsbury, Holly Rise, Manor Close, Roman Way.

The largest TMO (Bloomsbury, (which also has celebrated 25 years) manages over 600 properties on behalf of the council, and works to deliver services to the tenants and leaseholders on issues including ASB and Welfare Reform.

As part of the Council's Devolution and Localisation Programme, started in 2004, the Council has been looking at how best residents can get involved in their local area and service delivery. Between 2012 and 2014 the Cabinet considered reports on the subject of a new tenant engagement framework ((see Appendix 1 and 2). The reports set out a revised framework for engagement and as a result there have been changes to the structure and policies of the HLB and Co Regulation approach. The HLB and CHLB (City Housing Liaison Board) have recently completed a 3 year transformation plan that included amendments to its constitutions and was only made possible through the hard work and dedication of key volunteer members.

Successes of the Current Tenant Engagement Framework

There have been a number of key successes for the current structure of engagement in recent years.

- There have been a number of guides published by the Resident Involvement Team, including specific information on the HLB Movement, and a general menu of the various methods of involvement available to tenants and leaseholders.
- The Kitemark Assessment, agreed upon in the 2014 Cabinet Report, has since been instituted and refined as a way to encourage best practice for co-regulation, and consistency across all HLBs.
- 2017 also saw the procurement of training for HLB members and other engaged tenants, building capacity of members at the local and city level, both in the policies and practices of the group and in gaining a deeper understanding of the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and social housing legislation.
- The Street Scene initiative to educate tenants on waste disposal to gain cleaner, greener communities has led to the introduction of recognition awards as part of the annual Birmingham in Bloom competition. Birmingham in Bloom aims to recognise the effort tenants and leaseholders give to keep to their conditions of tenancy, maintaining their property and contributing to their neighbourhood. The annual competition now aims to also recognise the achievements of groups and individuals who work on community projects such as litter picks in their neighbourhood.
- The Performance Monitoring Group (PMG) had involvement in selecting the new repairs contractors in their role of City-wide co-regulation, and continues to monitor the KPI reports for across each of the districts.
- In March 2017, the Welfare Reform and Financial Inclusion subgroup worked directly with the Resident Involvement and Welfare Reform Teams to deliver a conference for engaged tenants and leaseholders on the subject of the Welfare Reform, identifying facilitators for workshops and key partners to attend. The subgroup and Welfare Reform Team have also given recommendations on financial inclusion as part of a wider report to the Lords Select Committee, and a follow up workshop from the conference will be given at the upcoming national ARCH conference, due to be held in Birmingham in September 2017.

Challenges to the Current Tenant Engagement Framework

The ways in which we interact with our tenants across our tenant engagement framework should be reviewed to ensure we not only fulfil the co-regulatory requirements, but actively listen to tenant and leaseholder concerns. The HLB Movement has been active for 25 years, and between these and other local groups and forums we should ensure all areas in Birmingham are covered. A policy and practice review, looking at governance, transparency, and engagement methods would only strengthen the position of such groups moving forward. All of the currently active groups in Birmingham will face similar challenges in upcoming years. Groups that are dependent of Council funding will likely be affected by funding issues; staff numbers and group budgets are likely to shrink, so a need for cost-effective engagement is paramount. Groups may need to alter practice and look for multiple sources of funding, if they are not doing so already, and the engagement methods may need to adapt, for example using more electronic methods such as Social Media and email as the norm over postal communications. Making such changes and ensuring the maximum level of engagement for the least cost now could help justify budgets or grants in the future.

Succession planning within tenant groups such as the HLB will be an issue in years to come. The age profile of current members naturally tends towards retired individuals, who are able to give time to meetings. By updating practices of such groups, increasing their social media presence, streaming public meetings, the group may gradually increase its membership.

Many members join a local group to champion a particular issue of importance to them; a more active local HLB that focuses on the key issues of their neighbourhood may retain such members in the long term. Commitment to continual training for members and investment in the partnership between the Council and the local groups could attract new, younger membership. Outside of current groups the Council should review wider tenant engagement practices to allow for engagement with those who cannot give time to weekly or monthly meetings. Alternative methods of engagement; email forums, social media groups or topic specific one-off workshops may be a consideration moving forward.

The upcoming boundary changes could affect many groups across the City. While many groups cover a particular area, this may have covered a particular ward previously, and changes to this may cause issues for the running of individual groups and forums. Currently HLBs are covering most areas across Birmingham; however a clarification of the HLB structure beyond the boundary changes would help solidify the position of the Movement to its members. This would also be an opportunity to highlight any areas currently without a HLB to ensure consistent available service to tenants and leaseholders.

A report to Cabinet Committee on 12th July proposed a general change to the way in which we work with local leadership. This proposes a more consistent approach to Ward planning, which will be the core of the place shaping approach adopted by the whole Council. Some wards have a particularly large concentration of social housing stock. In those areas it will be particularly important to ensure that the Ward Planning approach encompasses both council tenants and residents more widely. Partnership working needs to be at the heart of this process which will require more innovative approaches to tenant and resident engagement.

Proposal

It is proposed that there be a review of the current tenant engagement framework, looking at methods of engagement and co-regulatory practice, to strengthen current groups at both the local and city level. This would be an opportunity to update policies and practices, benchmark against other Local Authorities, Housing Associations, ARCH and other organisations and highlight potential new ways of cost effective engagement. The review will also provide an opportunity to explore how the work of the new Housing Birmingham partnership board can support developing joined engagement solutions that are cross tenure, helping to create sustainable communities and links to Community led Housing solutions. Thought should also be given to shifting to a community or neighbourhood engagement practice, and the need to engage with privately renting tenants and general residents who will be affected by many of the same issues as social housing tenants and leaseholders.

The initial review would last between 6-12 months, to gain insight into the necessary work in updating current groups, and the potential need for a new tenant engagement framework going forward.

Recommendations

The committee is requested to agree the proposed initial review of the current Tenant Engagement Framework to scope any necessary changes to policy, practice and methods of engagement and co-regulation.

Appendix 1-2012 Cabinet Report

Appendix 2- 2014 Cabinet Report

Appendix 3- How to get involved in your neighbourhood

Appendix 4- HLB Know How Guide

BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

PUBLIC REPORT

Report to:	CABINET
Report of:	Strategic Director Local Services
Date of Decision:	11 February 2012
SUBJECT:	TENANT ENGAGEMENT: RESULTS OF CONSULTATION ON A NEW STRUCTURE FOR TENANT ENGAGEMENT AND PROPOSALS FOR A FUTURE TENANT ENGAGEMENT FRAMEWORK
Key Decision: Yes	Relevant Forward Plan Ref: 4192546
If not in the Forward Plan: (please "X" box)	Chief Executive approved <input type="checkbox"/> O&S Chairman approved <input type="checkbox"/>
Relevant Cabinet Member(s):	Councillor Ian Ward – Deputy Leader of the Council Councillor John Cotton – Social Cohesion and Equalities Councillor Steve Bedser – Health & Wellbeing
Relevant O&S Chairman:	Councillor Lisa Trickett – Districts and Public Engagement Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Wards affected:	All

<p>1. Purpose of report:</p> <p>1.1 To present the findings from a consultation exercise on a new tenant engagement structure.</p> <p>1.2 To seek Cabinet approval for an enhanced tenant engagement structure based on the consultation findings and policy drivers.</p>

<p>2. Decision(s) recommended:</p> <p>That Cabinet is requested to:</p> <p>2.1 Note, the tenant engagement consultation findings (Appendix 1) and independent verification of the consultation (Appendix 2)</p> <p>2.2 Note the policy drivers for evaluating consultation and developing and building on a tenant engagement structure for Birmingham (Appendix 3)</p> <p>2.3 Agree the proposed outline structural arrangements for tenant engagement for developing a sustainable, inclusive and representative tenant structure building on the self-organising principles underpinning the tenants movement in Birmingham. (Appendix 4) including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • establishment of ten new District Housing Panels (subject to the guidance set out in Appendix 4, at point 2 under the Districts section) • disestablishment of Constituency Tenant Groups • retention of Housing Liaison Boards, City Housing Liaison Board, Sheltered Housing and Leaseholder Forums <p>2.4 Instruct the Strategic Director of Local Services to continue to engage with the Tenant Steering Group and CHLB and District Committees to bring together a development and implementation plan to take the structure forward.</p> <p>2.5 To report back to Cabinet with the finalised tenant engagement structure building on the structure (appendix four) within twelve months setting out progress after reporting to the Districts and Public Engagement Overview and Scrutiny Committee.</p>

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3. Consultation

3.1 Internal

The preparation of the consultation document and this report has involved extensive internal consultation including senior officers responsible for housing and other local services. The Leader of the Council, Deputy Leader, Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing, Cabinet Member for Social Cohesion and Equalities and other Cabinet Members and Executive Members for Local Services have been consulted and engaged during the preparation of this report. In addition the consultation findings and recommendations from those findings have been considered by Districts and Public Engagement Overview and Scrutiny Committee during the preparation of this report.

3.2 External

The consultation carried out over the 14 week period was primarily aimed at tenants. The consultation also included general external consultation including other residents, community organisations, Birmingham Social Housing Partnership, Birmingham Public Health and Birmingham Voluntary Services Council. The consultation findings and recommendations from those findings have been considered by a Tenants' Steering Group (sub group of CHLB) and City Housing Liaison Board during the preparation of this report.

4. Compliance Issues:

4.1 Are the recommended decisions consistent with the Council's policies, plans and strategies?

The consultation process on new tenant engagement proposals was in accordance with the consultative principles that public bodies should adopt for engaging stakeholders when developing policy.

The new tenant engagement structure will be an important mechanism for supporting the principle established in the Leader's Policy Statement of the devolution of housing landlord services to District Committees and the ambition to set up new District Housing Panels with direct engagement in the executive structure of the Council through co-opted places on District Committees. The new tenant engagement structure also contributes to the principles of making Birmingham an inclusive city through representative engagement.

4.2 Financial Implications (Will decisions be carried out within existing finances and Resources?)

The consultation exercise was carried out within existing resources and no external costs were incurred for printing, hire of venues etc. Beyond this, the recommendations arising do not entail any specific financial commitments for the Council at this stage. Any detailed revenue expenditure that arises in due course in implementing the recommendations, such as tenant training, will be funded through existing Housing Revenue Account budgets.

4.3 Legal Implications

Under the Localism Act 2011, the Council is required to comply with the regulatory duties for social landlords in England. New national regulatory standards for social housing providers were introduced on 1 April 2012. The Council must comply with the Regulator's standards which include the requirement for co-regulation: where landlords, the regulator and tenants work together to set, monitor and ensure that standards are met. The recommendations support the Council to meet these co-regulatory duties. The report sets out a structure where co-regulation will take place through ten District Committees, with devolved responsibility for housing management services alongside District Housing Panels as well as through City Housing Liaison Board and composite working groups/standing panels and forums in relation to aspects of the housing service (which should be subject to co-regulation) which are not devolved.

4.4 Public Sector Equality Duty (see separate guidance note)

The new tenant engagement structure should impact positively on the life of Birmingham's diverse community. An initial equality impact assessment indicates that there is potential for the structure to impact differentially on some of the protected groups identified in the Equality Act 2010 if the representativeness of engaged tenants, leaseholders and other residents is not improved. This will require improved collection and use of profile data across the equality strands to identify and address the barriers to accessing opportunities for engagement.

A communications campaign will be developed to target recruitment of underrepresented groups to get involved and influence the housing service.

As each District develops a detailed implementation plan the potential impacts will become more apparent and a full Equality Analysis for tenant engagement in each district will be required at that point. A full Equality Analysis for tenant engagement citywide will also be required at that point to assess the cumulative effect of the district tenant engagement structures.

5. Relevant background/chronology of key events:

- 5.1 With effect from April 2012 the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) have taken on the regulatory powers for social housing. Social housing providers are no longer subject to inspections from the regulator and intervention will only be in the event of serious failures (financial failure or serious harm to tenants such as health and safety; loss of home, unlawful discrimination, loss of legal rights). However, the HCA expects social landlords to meet the regulatory standards they have set. The regulations are split into economic (these are financial regulations which are not applicable to council retained stock) and consumer regulation. Tenant involvement and empowerment is one of the four consumer standards under the consumer regulations. Whilst there is no prescriptive solution; the regulator expects social landlords to adopt a co-regulatory approach; where the landlord, the regulator and tenants together set, monitor and ensure standards are met. Social landlords will be expected to positively engage with tenants, incorporating tenant views and be transparent and accountable to tenants. Tenant involvement is expected to be through informal, formal and collective measures.

- 5.2 In May 2012 a new constitution was agreed at Council which included a number of newly devolved services, functions and responsibilities for District Committees. This included Housing Management. In effect District Committees received executive authority in relation to a significant aspect of the housing service. In July 2012, Cabinet agreed a Meeting Arrangement “protocol” for District Committees which set out details on the conduct and exercise of devolved powers and responsibilities via District Committees; including that of Co-opting rights for District Committees enabling them to invite two tenant advisors at District Committees. In September 2012, Cabinet agreed a Directorate structure including the new Local Services Directorate alongside appropriate budget and staffing arrangements.
- 5.3 In May 2012 initial options for future tenant engagement were drawn up taking into account the provisions at 5.1 above (co-regulatory responsibilities of social landlords, including local authorities and at 5.2 above (localisation of housing management). These proposals outlined an approach that sought to strengthen the Council’s tenant engagement structure across five tiers of engagement at Neighbourhood, Ward, District, Quadrant and City level. In July 2012 detailed proposals were set out against these five tiers of engagement in a detailed consultation document and a 12 week consultation process commenced with tenants and stakeholders.
- 5.4 The aims of the proposals were to root tenant engagement in the new devolved political decision-making and localised service delivery structures and meet new regulatory requirements for social housing providers. The options presented were to:
- Stop formal support for the current Constituency Tenant Groups (CTGs) and Housing Liaison Boards (HLBs). HLBs are independent organisations with their own constitutions and the Council does not have the option of dissolving them.
 - Instead offer currently involved tenants places on one of 10 new District Housing Panels and in an enhanced range of opportunities for tenants to get their voices heard in their neighbourhood
- 5.5 By this, the proposed structure aimed to provide:
- A tenant engagement structure that can better interact with the devolved housing service and support wider housing and neighbourhood based improvements.
 - A flexible range of opportunities for community engagement across diverse communities to develop a representative and inclusive tenant engagement structure that contributes to tackling inequality and promotes social inclusion.

5.6 During the consultation period it became clear that there was a significant body of opinion around the retention of the current HLB and CHLB structure. In response to this the consultation paper was amended to provide an additional option around the retention of HLBs and CHLB, alongside the other options presented and the consultation period was extended by two weeks. In addition arrangements were made to carry out independent evaluation of the consultation process and the analysis produced against this. City Housing Liaison Board were also approached to engage as a critical friend of the process and to overview work undertaken by officers in relation to the analysis. A tenant steering group of CHLB members was set up to take this forward and they have met with officers five times up until the production of this report.

5.7 A motion was agreed at Full Council in 16th October that “the responses from tenants should be conveyed to the Districts and Public Engagement Scrutiny Committee who have set up a working group to look at housing devolution and the management of the city’s housing stock, and tenant engagement is a specific work stream which will feed into the recommendations arising from the tenant consultation process. Only after consideration of matters by Overview and Scrutiny Committee should Cabinet bring forward final executive decisions”. On the 11 of December the Districts and Public Engagement Overview and Scrutiny Committee received a presentation setting out the outline proposals for a tenant engagement framework alongside the consultation responses and independent review. Following this, the Committee resolved: “ That the presentation on the Tenant Engagement consultation, the findings and emerging recommendations, together with associated documents, be noted and the overarching conclusions and emerging recommendations now presented be generally supported subject to clarification of the issues raised including on accountability and spend of the discretionary fund, performance monitoring of the housing management service and the Overview and Scrutiny/Executive functions of District Committees.” These matters are addressed in appendix 4 of this report.

5.8 As set out in 5.6, the Tenant Steering Group of CHLB were engaged in receiving the consultation proposals, reviewing the policy drivers and in commenting the proposals presented initially to Overview and Scrutiny and now Cabinet. City Housing Liaison Board received and endorsed presentation on the consultation responses, independent review and outline proposals on 13 of December 2012.

5.9 Appendix 1 sets out the detailed consultation findings on the proposals for a new Tenant Engagement structure. Appendix 2 provides the commentary of the independent advisor on the consultation process carried out from July to December 2012.

Appendix 3 further sets out the policy drivers used to translate the findings into recommendations to Cabinet and appendix 4 discusses the recommendations arising (Appendix 4).

6. Evaluation of alternative option(s):

6.1 The consultation process explored a proposal for a radical new structure for tenant engagement. During the consultation a significant body of opinion was expressed in favour of an alternative option of retaining and developing the existing HLB structure. This report outlines the recommendations arising from the results of consultation on those alternative options and the policy drivers affecting tenant engagement.

7. Reasons for Decision(s):

- 7.1 To provide the findings from consultation on a new tenant engagement structure which will deliver improved opportunities for tenant engagement in line with the Council's devolution and localisation agenda and the new regulatory requirements for social housing providers.

Signatures

Councillor John Cotton – Social Cohesion and Equalities Date

Councillor Steve Bedser – Health & Wellbeing Date

Chief Officer: Date

List of Background Documents used to compile this Report:

1. Consultation document by BCC 'Localisation and tenant engagement: proposals for a new tenant engagement structure'
2. Equality Impact Assessment – Tenant Engagement
3. Presentation to Districts and Public Engagement Overview and Scrutiny – December 2012
4. Presentation to City Housing Liaison Board – December 2012
5. Presentation to Executive Members of Local Services Forum – January 2013
6. Cabinet Office Consultation Principles – Guidance
7. Regulatory Standards on tenant involvement and empowerment, Localism Act 2011

List of Appendices accompanying this Report (if any):

1. Consultation Findings on Proposals for a New Tenant Engagement Structure
2. Tenant Engagement Structure – Consultation Review
3. Tenant Engagement Policy Drivers
4. Outline Framework for Tenant Engagement and Implementation Plan

Report Version	Final	Dated	24/01/2013
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BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

PUBLIC

Report to:	CABINET
Report of:	Strategic Director of Place
Date of Decision:	17th March 2014
SUBJECT:	DELIVERY OF TENANT ENGAGEMENT FRAMEWORK
Key Decision: No	Relevant Forward Plan Ref: 501517
If not in the Forward Plan: (please "X" box)	Chief Executive approved <input type="checkbox"/> O&S Chairman approved <input type="checkbox"/>
Relevant Cabinet Member(s):	Councillor John Cotton – Social Cohesion and Equalities
Relevant O&S Chairman:	Councillor Lisa Trickett – Districts and Public Engagement
Wards affected:	All
1. Purpose of report:	
1.1 To approve the arrangements for engagement with City Council tenants.	

2. Decision(s) recommended:	
That Cabinet is requested to:	
2.1 Approve the proposed finalised arrangements for tenant engagement.	
2.2 Approve the 'Guide for Housing Liaison Boards in Birmingham' attached at Appendix 1. The Guide outlines a set of standards for Housing Liaison Boards and arrangements for a HLB kitemark standard of recognition in order for them to be part of formal arrangements for tenant engagement	
2.3 Note the progress made in the delivery of the framework for tenant engagement to date.	
2.4 Note the continued commitment of the City Council as a landlord to engaging with its tenants and residents in a meaningful and constructive manner.	
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3. Consultation

Consultation should include those that have an interest in the decisions recommended.

3.1 Internal

The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing have been consulted on the report. District Committees have been engaged in the development of the new framework through District Committee reports in the March and September 2013 District Committee Cycle. District and Public Engagement Scrutiny Committee have also been engaged and received presentations on the framework.

3.2 External

The development of the new framework has been undertaken in partnership with City Housing Liaison Board as agreed by Cabinet in February 2013.

4. Compliance Issues:

4.1 Are the recommended decisions consistent with the Council's policies, plans and strategies?

The establishment of a framework for tenant engagement contributes to delivering a democratic city and involving local people and neighbourhoods as set out in the Leader's Policy Statement. It will also add to the work of District Committees in taking forward localisation and devolution.

4.2 Financial Implications **(Will decisions be carried out within existing finances and Resources?)**

The establishment of the framework for tenant engagement will be carried out within existing resources. These resources are included within the HRA Business Plan.

4.3 Legal Implications

The framework for tenant engagement will enable the City Council to fulfil its regulatory requirement as a landlord to co-regulate the housing service and provide opportunities to tenants to shape service delivery. This duty is determined by the Homes and Communities Agency.

4.4 Public Sector Equality Duty

The framework for tenant engagement will provide opportunities for all tenants to engage with the city Council on landlord issues as well as wider neighbourhood matters. A stage 1 Equality Assessment has been completed and is attached at Appendix 3.

5. Relevant background/chronology of key events:

- 5.1 In February 2013, a report was presented to Cabinet setting out the results of consultation on a proposed new tenant engagement structure and the detailed proposals for a future tenant engagement framework which had emerged from the consultation findings. A recommendation of the report was to report back to Cabinet in 12 months with the finalised tenant engagement structure.
- 5.2 The future tenant engagement framework which was set out in the report of February 2013 comprised of the following **key elements**:
- 5.2.1 Confirmation of the responsibility of **District Committees** in managing the housing service. Therefore they have responsibility to comply with the regulation framework
- 5.2.2 Recognition of the regulation framework for social housing within which BCC must operate and in particular the statutory requirement to **co-regulate** the housing service with our tenants
- 5.2.3 Confirmation of the Council's commitment to retain the **Housing Liaison Board (HLB) movement**, including the City Housing Liaison Board, Sheltered Housing Liaison Board and Leaseholder Forums. However it was recommended that further work be done with the HLB movement to develop and modernise.
- 5.2.4 The **establishment of District Housing Panels** with accountability to District Committees
- 5.2.5 The contribution made to wider **neighbourhood engagement** through the delivery of the framework for tenant engagement
- 5.2.6 The **disestablishment of the Constituency Tenants Groups**
- 5.2.7 Progress with each of these elements is set out below.
- 5.3 District Committees
- 5.3.1 All District Committees have been presented with reports in the March and September Committee cycle setting out the requirements of the Cabinet report of February 2013. District Committees were asked to work within the guidance set down within the Cabinet report and to establish arrangements for tenant engagement to meet the needs within their District, including the establishment of a District Housing Panel.
- 5.3.2 There are variations in the proposed arrangements in each District as they are being developed to meet local need and requirements although they are being developed in line with broad guidance from the Cabinet report of February 2013.

5.4 Co-Regulation

5.4.1 Co-regulation places the responsibility for meeting the regulation standards of the Homes and Communities Agency on BCC as a landlord. The principles of co-regulation are:

1. Boards and Councillors who govern (housing) providers are responsible and accountable for delivering their organisation's social housing objectives
2. (Housing) providers must meet the regulatory standards.
3. Transparency and accountability is central to co-regulation
4. Tenants should have opportunities to shape service delivery and to hold the responsible Boards and Councillors to account
5. (Housing) providers should demonstrate that they understand the particular needs of their tenants
6. Value for money goes to the heart of how (housing) providers ensure current and future delivery of their objectives

5.4.2 Within the responsibility to meet the regulatory standards (number 2 above), one of the standards relates specifically to involvement and empowerment. It includes the requirement to ensure that tenants are given a wide range of opportunities to influence and be involved in:

- the formulation of their landlord's housing related policies and strategic priorities
- the making of decisions about how housing related services are delivered including the setting of service standards
- the scrutiny of their landlord/s performance and the making of recommendations to their landlord about how performance might be improved.

5.4.3 The tenant engagement structure will deliver the duty to co-regulate in the following ways:

- A formal framework for structured tenant engagement will exist through the Housing Liaison Board (HLB) structure, including the City Housing Liaison Board at a city wide level. In order to ensure that HLBs are fit for purpose to engage as part of that formal framework for co-regulation, a set of standards has been developed which will be part of a quality kitemark for HLBs and this is set out in detail in the 'Guide for Housing Liaison Boards in Birmingham' (Appendix 1). The network of HLBs will be supported by the City Council in its role as landlord. This will include working with tenants to set up HLBs (or equivalent bodies which comply with the requirements set out in the Guide) to cover those areas where there is currently a gap in coverage.
- Engaging with a whole range of organisations at the neighbourhood level to enable them play a part in the framework
- Offering a menu of involvement for tenants to engage through initiatives such as tenant inspectors, tenant champions which enables them to play a part in the framework
- Performance Management Information has been developed and improved over the

last 12 months and is regularly presented to tenants and to District Committees.

5.4.4 District Committees must understand their accountability in relation to co-regulation and recognise this responsibility in their development of arrangements for tenant engagement.

5.5 Housing Liaison Boards

5.5.1 As set out above, the Cabinet report of February 2013 stated our commitment to retain Housing Liaison Boards and to work with them to develop and modernise. Housing Liaison Boards are an organised network of tenant led organisations and therefore provide the mechanism through which the Council will deliver on its responsibility for co-regulation of the landlord service (as set out in 5.4.3 above) as well as engage with tenants on wider neighbourhood matters.

5.5.2 Council Officers and City HLB have worked in partnership to produce a new Guide for Housing Liaison Boards in Birmingham, with an accompanying new website. The guide formalises the role and remit for Housing Liaison Boards (HLBs) and sets out arrangements for the provision of support for HLBs. The Guide also sets out a process for the formal recognition of HLBs and the award of a quality kitemark which confirms that they have reached an appropriate standard to engage formally with Birmingham City Council as landlord and be part of the framework for co-regulation.

5.5.3 A copy of the Guide for Housing Liaison Boards is attached at Appendix 1

5.5.4 Housing Liaison Boards operate at a local level and generally cover a ward or part of a ward. However, there are some gaps in coverage and work is in progress to establish HLBs (or equivalent bodies which comply with requirements set out in the Guide) so that, as far as possible, all areas can be covered.

5.5.5 As well as operating at a local level, Chairs of HLBs will come together at a District or Quadrant level to form an HLB District Chairs Forum. It is anticipated that these HLB District Chairs Forums will provide the formal link to the District Strategic Housing Panels (see below).

5.6 District Strategic Housing Panels

5.6.1 The Cabinet Report of February 2013 requires each District Committee to establish a District Housing Panel.

5.6.2 Both Cabinet and District Committees recognise that there is also a need for wider strategic housing matters to be considered at a district level. This complements the role played by the HLBs around specific landlord and tenant engagement issues.

5.6.3 Therefore District Committees have generally agreed that District Housing Panels should have a strategic focus and address strategic housing concerns in their district. Therefore they will be cross-tenure in composition and will consider housing issues relating to both the public and private sectors. They will take stock of housing growth and issues affecting the supply and demand for housing including housing development and will also consider housing needs within each district. To inform this process a District Strategic Housing Assessment is being developed for each District as well as a map showing housing land and development.

- 5.6.4 District Strategic Housing Panels will work with the HLB District Chairs Forums (5.5.5 above) to oversee the co-regulatory duty and will act as a point of reference to raise concern where the duty is at risk. The HLB District Chairs Forum will generally be the point of contact with the District Strategic Housing Panel although this does depend on the particular circumstances and arrangements in each District.
- 5.6.5 District Committees are leading the development of District Strategic Housing Panels as they are formally accountable to the District Committees and may have representation at District Committee meetings. Progress with the establishment of the District Strategic Housing Panels has reflected the complexity of discussions in each district and the engagement of housing stakeholders. However, to date, all District Committees have established member reference groups to plan and develop their Housing Panel and will host their first meeting by the end of April 2014.
- 5.6.6 At the heart of the work of the District Strategic Housing Panels will be an evidence base of the issues faced by each district as contained in the District Strategic Housing Assessment for each District (see outline at Appendix 2).

5.7 Neighbourhood Engagement

- 5.7.1 The framework for tenant engagement will contribute to wider neighbourhood development. It offers opportunities for local ownership and leadership of neighbourhood improvements. It complements the broader agenda set out in the City's Neighbourhood Framework.
- 5.7.2 The framework recognises that whilst it is important to have a landlord / tenant relationship which allows for meaningful engagement of tenants in shaping and scrutinising the housing service, many issues faced by tenants are neighbourhood based and therefore need to engage all residents, regardless of tenure.
- 5.7.3 The City Council is committed to the delivery of integrated working at a local level and will support the engagement of residents of all tenures in improving neighbourhoods and working in partnership to improve services. Housing Liaison Boards are part of this – they are tenant led but also allow for the membership of residents of other tenures with their boards, although tenants must be in a majority. Other bodies such as Residents Associations and Neighbourhood Forums will continue to play an important role and will be encouraged to do so.

5.8 Constituency Tenants Groups

- 5.8.1 In line with the Cabinet report of February 2013, Constituency Tenants Groups have now all been formally disestablished.

6. Evaluation of alternative option(s):

The tenant engagement framework was agreed at Cabinet in February 2013.

7. Reasons for Decision(s):

To implement Cabinet's recommendation from the Cabinet report in February 2013

Signatures

Date

Cabinet Member

.....
Cllr John Cotton,
Social Cohesion and
Equalities

Chief Officer

.....
Sharon Lea, Strategic Director
of Place

List of Background Documents used to compile this Report:

Relevant Officer's files save for confidential information

List of Appendices accompanying this Report (if any):

1. Guide for Housing Liaison Boards in Birmingham
2. District Strategic Housing Assessment – Outline of Contents
3. 3A. Equality Initial Screening and 3B Public Sector Equality Duty Statement

Report Version		Dated	
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A guide to becoming an



**Approved Birmingham
Housing Liaison Board**

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INTRODUCTION

As part of our agreement to develop and support Housing Liaison Boards (HLB) role in the co-regulation of housing services, Birmingham City Council together with the City Housing Liaison Board, has developed a set of standards which are set out below. An 'Approved Birmingham Housing Liaison Board kitemark' will be awarded for usage to HLBs that can show they are meeting the standards.

The award of a kitemark will show that a HLB is recognised:

- as a member of City HLB and entitled to send a representative to its meetings; and
- as the Council's partner in co-regulating the standard of housing services it provides to tenants and leaseholders.

HLB STRUCTURE

Housing Liaison Boards can only be effective if there are clear and functioning structures. Therefore to be recognised a HLB must have:

- ✓ a clear set of aims agreed by members
- ✓ a signed copy of the HLB Constitution
- ✓ a signed copy of the HLB Code of Conduct
- ✓ a signed equality statement
- ✓ an up-to-date AGM
- ✓ only one HLB covering a given area
- ✓ carried out a monthly HLB walkabout



HLB MEMBERSHIP

A HLB must be representative of the views of tenants and leaseholders in their area it is therefore important that:

- ✓ they have an elected chair and vice chair
- ✓ they have representation at CHLB
- ✓ at least 6 and no more than 20 members
- ✓ 75% of members are tenants
- ✓ decision making at HLB meetings is by consensus and each member gets one vote
- ✓ follow agreed format for an HLB Agenda

INFORMATION AND ACCOUNTABILITY

To show the HLB is accountable to tenants and leaseholders in the area they represent, they must:

- ✓ hold regular meetings (6 to 10 times a year)
- ✓ let observers attend a HLB meeting (with prior arrangement)
- ✓ publish a schedule of future HLB meeting dates and times at accessible venues on the resident involvement pages of the Birmingham City Council website
- ✓ provide up-to-date information on the resident involvement pages of the Birmingham City Council website
- ✓ put contact details for HLB members on the resident involvement pages of the Birmingham City Council website
- ✓ put up-to-date agendas and minutes on the resident involvement pages of the Birmingham City Council website

birmingham.gov.uk/residentinvolvement



TENANT LEADERSHIP

HLB members need to have or develop skills and attitudes that enable them to become effective tenant leaders to take part in the co-regulation of housing services by:

- ✓ demonstrating an understanding of an HLB member's role, purpose and responsibilities to other tenants
- ✓ demonstrating an ability to think independently, reach their own conclusions, challenge where appropriate and hold the Council to account
- ✓ showing an enthusiasm to learn and engage with tenants and landlords to gain a wider knowledge
- ✓ reviewing the capacity, skills and knowledge of members collectively and individually.

EQUALITY AND FAIRNESS TO ALL

HLBs must be run in accordance with equality and diversity principles. They should be accessible to all and any tenant should be able to raise an issue through their HLB. They therefore must demonstrate:

- ✓ they treat other members and officers with respect at all times
- ✓ that any tenant can join a HLB (unless stated in the Constitution)
- ✓ an awareness of the tenant profile
- ✓ an awareness of the barriers to involvement
- ✓ that when carrying out activities the HLB has considered the impact activities will have on diverse groups



- ✓ that the HLB will advocate on the behalf of the most disadvantaged tenants
- ✓ they are governed by codes of conduct and take appropriate steps if these are breached

MONITORING OUTCOMES

As HLBs take on more of a role in the co-regulation of the councils housing services, HLB members need to possess a greater knowledge and understanding of the activities and outcomes achieved by the HLB to improve services and the area where they live. To support this, the HLB should develop:

- ✓ an HLB Action Plan (Annual Plan) to record the aims and objectives of the HLB. This will include campaigns, consultations and activities funded by the Community Improvement Budget.
- ✓ regularly report and monitor outcomes against activities set out in the HLB action plan
- ✓ put together an annual report that contains a review of activities and assessment of outcomes to ensure the HLB are delivering benefits to tenants. This will be presented at a public meeting
- ✓ Carry out an annual review of the plan to consider new ideas and approaches.



REVIEWING THE KITEMARK

Birmingham City Council together with the CHLB will review the award of the Approved Birmingham Housing Liaison Board 'kitemark' on a biennial basis (or in response to complaints). If the review is satisfactory then the HLB will continue to be recognised. In some cases the city council and the CHLB may agree a list of improvements that need to be made, and may suspend or withdraw the use of the kitemark if necessary.

CONTACT

If you require any more information please contact the Birmingham City Council **Resident Involvement Team** on **0121 303 9851**.



How tenants and leaseholders can get involved in their neighbourhood



'How tenants and leaseholders can get involved where they live'

Why Get Involved?

Birmingham City Council is committed to making sure that our tenants and leaseholders are happy with the service they receive. To help us to achieve this, we want to give you as many opportunities as possible to share your views on our housing service. Your participation in these activities is important in helping us to identify problems, change and improve the services that we provide.

How You Can Get Involved

There are lots of ways that you can get involved. Some of these activities only take up a little of your time and many of these take place inside your home. Other activities take longer or happen more frequently and involve meetings and events. However getting involved at this level gives you an even greater say in the changes we make to our services and offers a chance to meet new people.

No matter what level of commitment you are able to give, there is an opportunity for everyone to have a say and make a difference to our housing services.



Contents

This booklet explains all of the different ways that you can get involved with us and share your views



Activities that only take up a little of your time

Part 1:

Activities that only take up a little of your time

- Informal activities you can do at home
- Informal activities that take place outside the home



Activities that take up a little more of your time

Part 2:

Activities that take up a little more of your time

- Formal groups operating at a local level
- Formal groups operating at a district level



Activities that take up more of your time

Part 3:

Activities that take up more of your time

- Formal groups operating at a Citywide Level

Part 4:

Tell us how you would like to get involved

- Resident Involvement Form
- Contact us

Activities that only take up a little of your time



These activities only require a small time commitment and allow you to share your views in an informal environment, at a time that suits you

■ Your Views - Less than 10 minutes

Your feedback is

important to us. It can help us to understand what we do well and how we can do better. You can make a comment, compliment or complaint by visiting www.birmingham.gov.uk/yourviews

■ Surveys - Less than 30 minutes per survey

We will survey a randomly selected group of tenants by email, post or over the telephone to ask them what they think about different aspects of our housing service. The findings will then be used to inform service improvements.

■ Focus Groups - 2 hours per focus group

A focus group brings together around 10 tenants for a one-off informal discussion about a particular service. An officer will identify the issues we would like your views on, oversee discussion and record your comments. We will keep those who attend updated on the progress of recommendations.

■ Events - 2 hours up to one day

You could go along to an event to find out what is happening at a national, regional or local level with regards to changes in tenant participation or housing

policy e.g. welfare reform. You will then be able to share your views and experiences with other tenants.

■ Consultation - up to 20 minutes

We welcome the views of interested tenants and will contact them by email, text, telephone, post or face to face asking for their opinions about specific service issues, giving them the opportunity to identify areas for improvement and future priorities to reflect local circumstances.

■ Keeping You Informed - less than 30 minutes

We will send information to interested tenants on our consultation register asking for their opinions about specific service issues or policy changes. We will keep tenants updated on how this information will be used to inform service improvements

■ Social Media - time commitment depends on you

You could follow our Facebook page or twitter account to keep up to date on what we are doing in resident involvement and tweet or email us your views. You could work with officers to develop and run local blogs and Facebook pages for your District. We are also giving tenants the opportunity to get involved with the roll out of digital services by helping other tenants get on-line and access services.

Activities that take up a little more of your time



These are more formal ways that you can get involved in shaping and developing services but these do require more of your time and may involve attending meetings or events.

■ **Block Champions - 2 hours, once a month**

We have recruited residents from each high and low rise block to act as block champions. Block Champions listen to and voice the views of other residents. They work with officers to audit the block on a monthly basis to make sure they are clean and tidy as well as identifying problems or communal repairs.

■ **Estate Walkabouts - 2 hours, once a month**

Estate walkabouts involve a group of tenants and Officers taking a short walk around an estate and looking for things that may need improving. Estate walkabouts are your opportunity to have your say about what's good and what's bad about where you live, with the knowledge that BCC will do something about what you said.

■ **Tenant Inspectors - 2 hours, ad hoc basis**

We will train tenants to inspect our properties who will work alongside housing staff to identify problems and then report these back to the repairs contractors for remedial action.

■ **Community Cashback - time commitment depends on your tenant group**

The new government initiative Community Cashback scheme paves the way for tenant groups to take over services in their shared spaces, such as gardening, cleaning, and security. They can then re-invest any savings they make into community projects to improve their area.

■ **Residents' Associations - 2 hours every month or every other month**

You would join other local residents to tackle issues that most concern you about your neighbourhood. If your resident association adopts the council's constitution and code of conduct, your association could get grants to help with set-up and running costs.

■ **Housing Liaison Boards (HLBs) - 2 hours, once a month**

HLBs are groups of tenants, leaseholders, local residents, councillors and housing staff. They follow a set of rules so that their work is carried out in a fair and clear way. By joining your local tenant group you will have a chance to co-regulate housing services. HLBs also receive a small budget to support area improvements or local projects.

■ **District Sheltered Housing Liaison Board (District SHLBs) - 2 hours, every 6 weeks**

You will meet other tenants, aged 50 and over, who live in sheltered housing and extra care housing schemes across Birmingham. By joining one of the district SHLBs in the city, you will have a chance to focus on issues that are specific to sheltered housing.

Activities that take up more of your time



These are formal groups that operate at a citywide level and require a greater time commitment. However these groups offer you the opportunity to get involved in citywide strategy and policy issues.

■ **Tenant Management Organisations (TMOs) - this depends on your TMO**

A Tenant Management Organisation is set up by residents to manage the homes in a specific area on behalf of the council. As a member of a TMO you will have a big say in the way your housing service is run and you will still be a tenant of the council.

■ **City Housing Liaison Board (CHLB) - 2 hours, every month**

One person from each HLB is elected to attend the CHLB, along with one person from SHLB, LLB and TMOs. You will take part in open and honest discussions on matters relating to the housing service. You will also take part in consultation on significant changes in policy or service delivery arrangements. The CHLB is a vital link between the housing service and tenants and leaseholders.

■ **Leaseholders' Liaison Board (LLB) - 2 hours - every month**

The Leaseholders' Liaison Board is made up of elected representatives from each constituency. You will look at issues that affect leaseholders such as major repair programmes and the development of neighbourhoods.

■ **City Sheltered Housing Liaison Board (City SHLB) - 2 hours once a month**

One person from each District SHLB is elected to attend this group. As part of this group, you will help to improve sheltered housing for tenants across the city.

■ **District Strategic Housing Panel - 2 hours, bi-monthly, quarterly and some only twice a year.**

District Strategic Housing Panels work to build partnerships with key stakeholders, internal departments and other partners to identify, prioritise and address the Strategic Housing issues within a District. Representatives on the panels include 'Birmingham City Council (BCC), Registered Social Landlords, elected members, BCC tenants, RSL tenants, private tenants and owner-occupiers'.

■ **Service Improvement Groups - 2 hours, 10 times a year**

These groups offer you the opportunity to monitor and improve services. The groups will also be consulted on changes in policies or procedures. You need to be elected by CHLB to become a member.

■ **Task and Finish Groups - 2 hours, as and when required**

We offer CHLB members the opportunity to sit on task and finish groups for welfare reform and procurement of services, such as repairs and maintenance or cleaning.

Resident Involvement Form

Resident involvement is really making a difference in Birmingham and helping to improve the services we provide to tenants – but we need your help to improve it further.

If you would like to be involved in influencing our policies, shaping our services and checking how well we are performing, please fill in the Resident Involvement Form overleaf.

Whether you have 10 minutes to spare or want a regular active role on one of our groups, there is something to suit everyone. This is your chance to tell us more about how you would like to get involved – so please complete the form and a Tenant Participation Officer will be in touch to discuss your preferred involvement.



Please complete the form in **BLOCK CAPITALS**.

To complete and return the form:

- Detach the questionnaire from the booklet
- Complete the questionnaire
- Fold the page in half and return in the Freepost envelope included in this document. If you do not have a Freepost envelope please use a stamp and return the questionnaire to

**Resident Involvement
Birmingham City Council
PO Box 16614
Birmingham
B2 2GU**

We look forward to hearing from you and working with you in the future.

Data Protection Information

The information you provide is confidential and subject to the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998. This personal data will be held and processed by Birmingham City Council for the purpose(s) of your preferred involvement with the Resident Involvement Team.

The personal details you provide will not be shared with any other party other than Birmingham City Council's Tenant Participation Officer(s) who will contact you to discuss your involvement further.

For further information of our privacy notice, please visit:

www.birmingham.gov.uk/privacy

You may ask for a copy of your personal information by writing to:

**Performance and Support Services
Governance and Compliance Team
Council House Extension
6 Margaret Street
Birmingham
B3 3BU**



Your Contact Details

Please complete fully in BLOCK CAPITALS

Title (please tick one box only): Miss Mr Mrs Ms

First name:

Surname:

Address including postcode:

Telephone number: Mobile number:

Email address:

Get Involved

Tick all that apply

1. How would you like to get involved?

Activities that only take up a little of your time

- Consultation
- Events
- Focus Groups
- Keeping You Informed
- Social Media
- Surveys
- Your Views

Activities that take up a little more of your time

- Block Champions
- Community Cashback
- District Sheltered Housing Liaison Board
- Estate Walkabouts
- Housing Liaison Boards
- Residents' Associations
- Tenant Inspectors

Activities that take up more of your time

- City Housing Liaison Board
- City Sheltered Housing Liaison Board
- District Strategic Housing Panel
- Leaseholders' Liaison Board
- Service Improvement Groups
- Task and Finish Groups
- Tenant Management Organisations

2. How would you like us to contact you?

- Email
- Letter
- Text message
- Face-to-face
- Telephone
- Other – specify:

3. What housing issues are you interested in?

- Affordable housing
- Antisocial behaviour
- Allocations / Lettings

- Choice based lettings
- Community cohesion
- Community safety
- Council Tax
- Decent Homes
- Development/regeneration
- Diversity
- Environmental issues
- Estate management
- Health and safety
- Local neighbourhood
- Performance monitoring
- Rents
- Repairs
- Shaping services
- Sheltered housing
- Tenancy conditions
- Value for money
- Welfare reform
- Other – please specify:

4. How much time can you spare to get involved? (please tick one box only)

- Up to 2 hours
- 2-4 hours
- 4-6 hours
- 6 hours or more

5. How often would this be? (please tick one box only)

- Weekly
- Quarterly
- Monthly
- Annually

6. What time of day is best for you? (please tick all that apply)

- Mornings 9am-12pm
- Afternoons 12pm-4pm
- Evenings 4pm onwards

Thank you for your response. Please tear out this page, fold in half and return in the supplied freepost envelope.

Map of Birmingham districts



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How to contact us

To find out more about getting involved with us, call your local tenant participation officer:

Erdington	Emma.Batterham@birmingham.gov.uk
Sutton Coldfield	Margaret.Scrivens@birmingham.gov.uk
Perry Barr	Sharon.Gayle@birmingham.gov.uk
Ladywood	Evangeline.Cripps@birmingham.gov.uk Munasif.Mohammed@birmingham.gov.uk
Edgbaston	Jennifer.A.Carter@birmingham.gov.uk
Yardley	Andy.Sheppard@birmingham.gov.uk
Hodge Hill	Firoza.loonat@birmingham.gov.uk
Northfield	Nadeen.Justice@birmingham.gov.uk
Selly Oak	Sarah.Wong@birmingham.gov.uk
Hall Green	Angela.Mayne@birmingham.gov.uk

You can also visit our web pages at
www.birmingham.gov.uk/getinvolved
or email residentinvolvement@birmingham.gov.uk

You will find our resident involvement form inside this brochure. If you complete and return the survey, we will get in touch with you to discuss your options further.