

Subject:	EAST KENT HOUSING - PROPOSED NEW FORMAL RESIDENT INVOLVEMENT STRUCTURE
Meeting and Date:	Scrutiny (Community & Regeneration) - 15 November 2017
Report of:	Matt Gough, East Kent Housing, Director of Customer Services
Classification:	UNRESTRICTED
Purpose of the report:	This report is for members to comment on the proposed recommendations
Recommendation:	Members are asked to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Note the report; and (ii) Comment on the proposed new formal resident involvement structure set out in this report.

1. Summary

- 1.1 Arrangements for resident involvement are a housing management function which has been delegated by the four Council owners to East Kent Housing. Over recent months the various structures which enable this involvement to take place have been reviewed. This report sets out proposals, which have been developed in consultation with residents (tenants & leaseholders), to change the formal resident involvement structure with the aim of providing improved governance through revised roles for local groups, reduction of duplication, introduction of a Residents' Panel and more focus on resident input into task and finish groups involved in specific projects. The purpose of this report is to brief members of the Scrutiny (Community and Regeneration) Committee on the proposed changes and give them an opportunity to comment on them.

2. Introduction and Background

- 2.1 East Kent Housing currently has a formal resident involvement structure which has four area boards (one for each council area), four residents on the main EKH Board (one from each council area) and four local groups (one for each area) which tend to consider the same information as the area boards. It also has a tenant scrutiny panel, sheltered housing panels and a communications group, all made up of residents, and a Service Improvement sub-committee, also involving residents.
- 2.2 The Tenant Scrutiny Panel (TSP) carried out a review of the formal resident involvement structure and provided recommendations which included:-
- I. A residents board covering the whole of the EKH area
 - II. Maintaining and reviewing the roles of local groups
 - III. Increased focus of task and finish project groups to produce specific and timely outcomes
 - IV. Reducing the duplication of groups
 - V. A consistent approach to the structure of groups, including their terms of reference, number of meetings agendas and their aims and objectives.

In order to develop these recommendations a group of wider residents from the four areas have been supported by an Independent Tenant Advisor to work with EKH to develop and recommend the new structure and the supporting documentation. As part of the work and

the development of the revised structure EKH have sought to retain the link back to the original recommendations of the Tenant Scrutiny Panel. In order to illustrate how the recommendations have been progressed EKH have considered each in turn along with details of how improvements have been progressed.

3. Detail

The proposed new structure is set out in Annex 1 has been amended to include the recommendations with regards to the roles of the Panel/groups received from the wider consultation

3.1 Residents' Panel

Role of the Panel - The Residents' Panel will replace the four Area Boards, and will consider issues across the EKH area. This is reflected in the new working arrangements for EKH, whereby staff now work across the whole area.

- The purpose of the Residents' Panel is to work with EKH to influence policies and strategies and to scrutinise performance on behalf of all EKH residents.
- The Residents' Panel would carry out the following activities:
- Influence service delivery arrangements
- Provide feedback and make recommendations regarding EKH housing related policies and strategies
- Monitor performance data and make recommendations on how performance can be improved.
- Monitor resident feedback, including satisfaction, compliments, complaints information and feedback from other groups of involved residents e.g. Local Groups and Task and Finish/Project Groups. Make recommendations for improvements.

Membership -

The Panel will comprise of twelve resident members, three from each of the four council areas, including provision for 1 leaseholder. A selection process will be used to appoint members who will serve a 3 year term with a maximum of 3 terms.

Resident Board Members - An EKH Resident Board Member will attend the Residents' Panel meetings and act as a link person between the Panel and the Board. Their role in relation to the Panel will include the following:

- To receive feedback from the Panel and report this information to the next available meeting of the EKH Board
- To provide feedback and updates from EKH Board meetings to the Residents' Panel

This will ensure the linkage between the Panel, local groups and main Board, as it is essential that the voice of residents is heard as part of the governance structure.

Meetings - The Residents' Panel will meet quarterly and will be quorate when eight out of the twelve members are present. EKH will provide involvement and secretarial support to the Panel.

Timing of meetings – Currently the regularity of meetings varies across the 4 areas, and it is proposed that the meeting intervals will move to quarterly to reflect the wider Board and Committee timings. Whilst for some areas meetings are currently quarterly for other areas this change has been met with concern. Some residents felt the time between meetings would be too long and there would be too many items on agendas to be able to effectively debate and provide recommendations.

For those areas where there have been concerns raised EKH have agreed to ensure that residents are supported so that local group meeting agendas and forward plans will be agreed/managed with Chairs. In addition to which with the move towards local groups focusing on local issues it is not anticipated at this time that more than 4 meetings per year will be necessary. The use of task and finish groups will enable residents to be engaged on bigger projects which may require more time for consultation and for their recommendations to be reported.

EKH have committed to responding to questions and any issues raised at local group meetings within 10 days of receiving their minutes. Any issues not responded to within this timescale will be highlighted to the EKH Management Team and to the Residents' Panel for scrutiny. This new procedure will also help the local groups to know that concerns will be raised to the highest level, and is another mechanism in ensuring that the tenants voice is heard.

EKH has also committed to review the new structure including the meeting schedule after a 12 month period following implementation. On this basis residents were happy to agree the quarterly meeting schedule.

3.2 Role of Local Groups

The role of the local groups has been considered and the new terms of reference have been summarised below.

The purpose of each Local Group will be to work with EKH, Councils, tenants and leaseholders to resolve local community issues, to support local community projects and to consider local opportunities for estate improvements, e.g. work with other social landlords and voluntary organisations if appropriate. In addition to EKH attending Local Group meetings appropriate Councillor(s) for housing will be invited to attend to participate and observe, in relation to local council services.

3.3 Increased Focus of Task and Finish Project Groups

The proposed structure as set out above includes for specific task related groups which will have a specified brief to consider specific issues that will be time limited and will report their findings through the formal EKH structure. This will ensure we are making the most of the commitment being made by residents to drive forward improvements and deliver positive outcomes in a targeted way.

3.4 Reduce the Duplication of Groups

A reduction in duplication will be achieved by the proposed revisions to the structure as previously outlined. The number of times information will be considered will be reduced, and this will help to ensure that feedback is consistent and acted upon.

3.5 A Consistent Approach to the Structure of Groups, Including their Terms of Reference, Number of Meetings Agendas and their Aims and Objectives

Revised Code of Conduct (Appendix 3) - Residents reviewed the code adding the EKH values and including examples of minor/serious breaches to bring clarity as to behaviours that are not considered acceptable. A section on how concerns about behaviours can be raised has also been added and how a breach of the code will be managed.

New Relationship and communication between groups (Appendix 4) - Residents' were keen to ensure there is a clear relationship and communication between the groups within the new structure. Appendix 4 sets out how each group will commit to working together and how and when they will share information with each other and wider residents in the future.

Role descriptions (Appendix 5) - The role description document has been developed with the help of residents to clarify for all residents involved at a formal level the roles of committee members and the qualities and abilities needed to carry out these roles effectively. This document will also support residents when considering standing or selecting committee members in the future.

3.6. Implementation of the new structure

It is proposed that the new structure be in place in time for the start of the new 2018/19 financial year.

EKH will continue to work with residents to;

- agree the recruitment processes for the new Resident Panel (Oct – Dec)
- finalise process for requesting information or escalating concerns including timeframes (Oct – Dec)
- recruit members of the new Residents' Panel (Jan – Feb)
- recruit additional members to local groups (Jan – Feb)
- provide training to Panel and Local Group members on the new way of working (Mar)
- schedule meetings to ensure effective feedback between Local Groups, Resident Panel and Board

4. Consultation

- 4.1 Extensive work has been undertaken with engaged residents, to ensure that the proposals are supported by, and were developed with, residents. This included surveys, workshops and task and finish project group.
- 4.2 The proposals are supported by residents and have been developed by them, and they contribute to improved governance at EKH and a greater ability for the Board to hear the voice of residents.

5. Resource Implications

There are no financial implications for the proposals.

6. Appendices

Annex 1 Proposed new formal resident involvement structure

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