

The future for tenant involvement.

Feedback from the T&F group, and comments
from SCHF held on 20 June 2016

Presentation to Housing Committee
28 June 2016

Findings of T&F Group

- Our current process focuses on formal structures, requiring a level of commitment in terms of time that restricts tenant access
- The formal nature of meetings can also be off putting
- Only a small % of tenants are represented, we have no young, family, BME tenants, and few or any disabled have been involved
- We want to increase significantly the numbers of tenants commenting and shaping the service

Tenant survey

1000 tenants were contacted in March and April 2016 to find out how they wanted to be involved.

- 83.9% would prefer to provide their views themselves
- 65.1% of respondents would only want to give their views if they have a problem or strong feelings about something
- 59.5 % of respondents would be interested in giving their views on a regular basis
- Text messaging was a preferred feedback method for 59.4% of residents aged 16 to 34
- Email was a preferred feedback method for 46.8% of respondents aged 35 to 64
- Post was a preferred feedback method for 50.1% of respondents aged 65 or over

What are we proposing?

- SCHF is replaced with the Housing Committee instead offering x2 formal seats on its committee with full debating and questioning inclusion, but for constitutional reasons, not voting rights
- That x3 regional tenant road show events are scheduled per annum, where information about the service, comments, feedback, consultation, the opportunity to engage in scrutiny activities, etc., can be undertaken and where convenience will be a priority, i.e. tenants can dip-in, dip-out and be as involved as they wish to be. SCHF felt this could be increased to maximise participation
- That the tenant inspectors role is enhanced

What are we proposing (2)?

- The scrutiny function is based around the x3 (or more) events so that scrutiny is on what matters to tenants and involvement is open to anyone interested in the scrutiny subject
- That ad hoc focus and other groups be convened on specific issues as defined by HC and tenant reps
- A tenants conference is piloted. Open to all, it will give an opportunity to learn about the service, its key issues, have a say and to do so, conveniently. With officers, members, partners, contractors and tenants invited, it could offer a chance for open and useful dialogue

Benefits

- We hope to achieve a more local and tenant focussed approach to engagement
- Increasing engagement numbers and with wider and more varied groups of tenants
- Giving tenants formal involvement in housing committee will increase tenant involvement and influence as well as giving elected members greater insight into the service, through feedback from tenant events, scrutiny and other mechanisms linked to HC
- Engagement will be more efficient and cost effective, investment '*in*' v number of tenants consulted and views received, '*out*'.

A change of focus

- Tenant engagement will be taken more to tenants and done less in Ebley Mill
- Every effort will be taken to increase access and remove barriers to involvement, e.g. location, formality, time commitment, etc.
- Engagement will be more to the tenants convenience and less to ours

Comments from SCHF

- Supportive of the overall approach, but keen to see the detail, how will it work, what will happen at local events, what will scrutiny look like, etc.?
- How will it be delivered and what will the timescale be?
- What will happen in the transition period?

Agreement with SCHF

Subject to support from HC, we will work jointly with the existing members of the forum, at further informal meetings to agree, progress, develop, implement and monitor:

- A project plan
- Relevant documents, agreements, etc.
- Recruitment of an ITA, HC tenant reps and training
- Dates and activities for the local events
- Delivery

Actions

Committee membership is a decision for full Council. We will need to:

- Seek Council approval in principle of having co-opted members and replacing Stroud Council Housing Forum

This will enable Housing Committee to sort out the detail in consultation with tenant reps and committee members on issues including:

- Selection process and provision appointment of HC tenant reps (subject to Council approval),
 - Appointment of ITA to undertake this,
 - Reach agreement on a structure for engagement events and other measures to support involvement
-
- To report to Housing Committee in September with nominated tenant representatives for approval by full Council in October

Decision

Recommendations to the Housing Committee:

To resolve:

- 1) To support the approach described in this presentation
- AND

To recommend to full Council:

- 2) The membership of the Housing Committee be amended to include 2 co-opted tenant members (with no voting rights) who may speak in committee on council housing matters
- 3) That SCHF be immediately replaced by informal and more effective tenant consultation arrangements and events