

MAYOR AND CABINET		
Report Title	Future of Resident Consultation with Lewisham Council Tenants and Leaseholders	
Key Decision	Yes	Item No.7
Ward	All	
Contributors	Executive Director for Customer Services	
Class	Open	Date: 5 March 2008

1. Summary

- 1.1 Lewisham Council is required by government to set out how it will consult with its residents about its housing services and this was encompassed in Lewisham's Tenant Participation (TP) Compact, which was launched in October 2002.
- 1.2 The last revision to the TP Compact was undertaken in 2004. The implementation of Lewisham's Decent Homes Strategy from 2004 has altered the arrangements of Lewisham's housing services significantly. The management of Lewisham Council homes are now split between:
- Borough wide ALMO (Lewisham Homes)
 - Private Finance Initiative in Brockley (Regenter B3)
 - Housing management contract in Central Lewisham (Dunlop Hayward).
- 1.3 The changes in how Lewisham's housing is managed has meant the need to revise the formal structures of resident involvement.

2. Purpose of Report

- 2.1 To present the proposed Residents' Charter between Lewisham Council, Lewisham Homes, Regenter B3 and Dunlop Hayward to Mayor & Cabinet.

3. Recommendation

- 3.1 The Mayor is recommended to approve the adoption of the Lewisham Residents' Charter encompassing stock managed by Lewisham Homes, Regenter B3 and Dunlop Hayward.

4. Policy Context

- 4.1 The Council has a statutory duty to maintain and publish arrangements for consulting with its secure tenants on matters of housing management. The Council's consultation arrangements are currently laid out in the Tenant Participation Compact, which outlines the framework for engaging with tenants and leaseholders.

5. Background – Development of Lewisham’s Tenant Participation Compact

- 5.1 Tenant Participation Compacts are agreements between Councils and their tenants, which set out how tenants can get involved in making decisions about how their homes are managed; how tenants, Council officers and elected members can work in partnership to improve local services and how the Council will consult and participate with their tenants on policy changes and levels of housing services.
- 5.2 Lewisham’s Tenant Participation Compact was based on standards set out in the *National Framework for Tenant Participation Compacts* document published by central government in June 1999.
- 5.3 From 2000 to 2002, a working party of residents with Council officers reviewed the existing tenant consultation structures and worked on developing a new approach. Wider consultation with residents was undertaken and Lewisham’s existing Tenant Participation Compact was formally launched in October 2002.
- 5.4 The structure was based on a ‘bottom up’ inclusive and accountable approach. Representatives were drawn primarily from Tenants & Residents Associations with options to encourage a range of local participation through other locally elected representative groups which has clear links to housing issues.

6. Decent Homes Strategy

- 6.1 Lewisham completed its stock options appraisal in June 2005 and submitted a comprehensive Decent Homes strategy to Government Office for London (GoL) setting out an investment plan for the entire housing stock to meet Decent Homes by 2010.
- 6.2 The Strategy outlined Lewisham’s mixed investment approach to meeting Decent Homes including seven stock transfers, two Private Finance Initiatives (PFIs) and the Arms Length Management Organisation (ALMO): Lewisham Homes.
- 6.3 Two stock transfers have now been completed. In April 2007, three tower blocks in Lewisham Park comprising 204 homes transferred to London & Quadrant. Over 6,000 homes in Bellingham, Bankfoot and John Henry transferred under community gateway model to Phoenix Community Housing on 3rd December 2007.
- 6.4 Other stock transfers in the pipeline include:
 - Grove Park – over 1400 homes scheduled to transfer to London & Quadrant in April 2008.
 - Foreshore – 65 Grade II listed home scheduled to transfer to Hyde in May 2008.
 - Orchard Estate & Village Court – 134 homes subject to a positive ballot are scheduled to transfer to Broomleigh in December 2008.

- Lee – 639 homes subject to a positive ballot are scheduled to transfer to Broomleigh in March 2009.
- Excalibur – 156 prefabricated homes subject to a positive ballot are scheduled to transfer to London & Quadrant in March 2009.

6.5 With the majority of the transfers being completed during 2008/09 and the management of the remaining homes being split between the Lewisham Homes, Regenter B3 for Brockley PFI and Dunlop Hayward for the Chrysalis area, the existing resident participation structure is no longer appropriate.

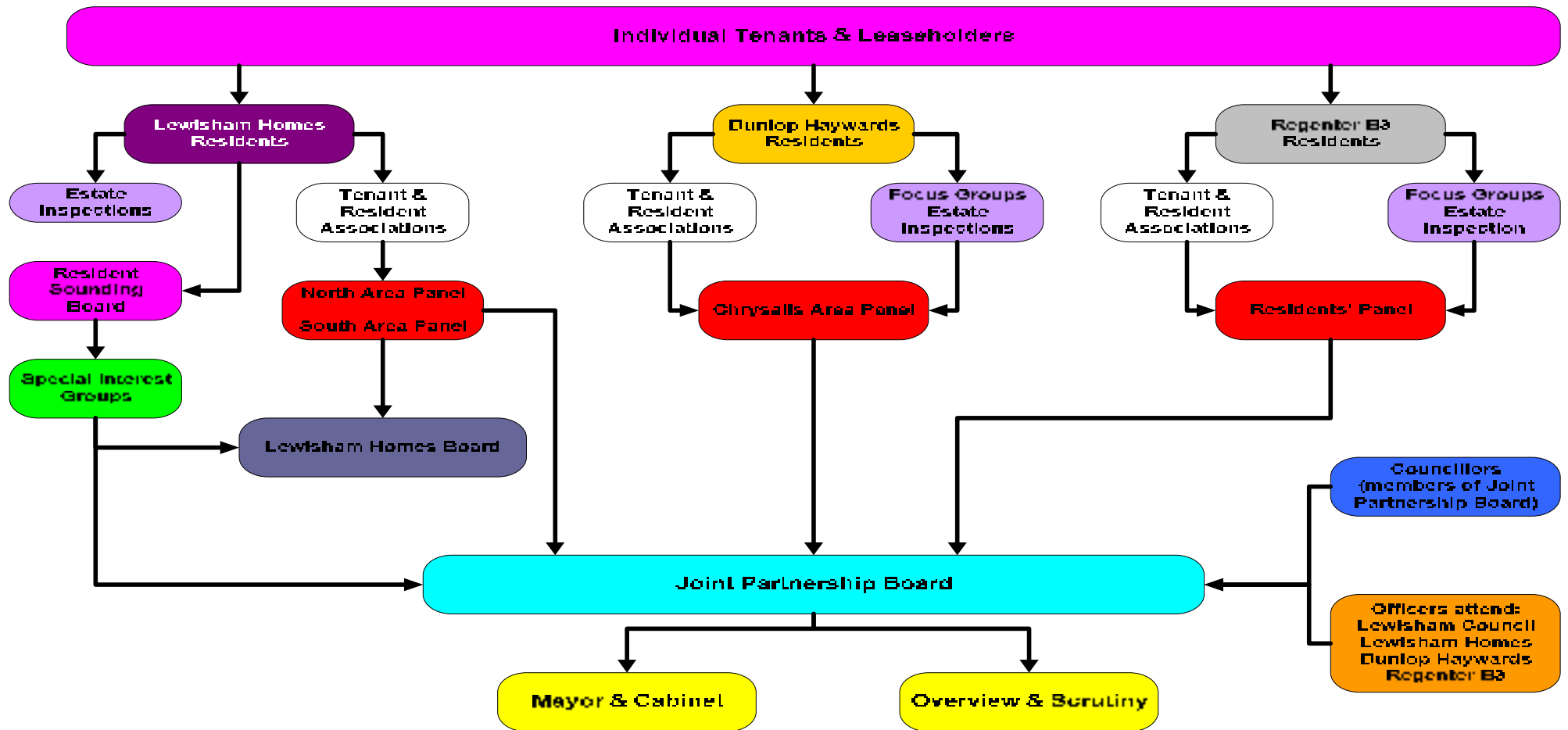
7. New Proposals

7.1 **Housing Joint Partnership Board** – Under the proposed new Residents' Charter each of the housing management providers would have their own local residents participation structures. These would each feed up into a Joint Partnership Board which will be the mechanism by which tenants and leaseholders can meet with the Council. The partnership board will bring together tenant and leasehold representatives from Lewisham Homes, Regenta B3, Dunlop Hayward, Lewisham Homes board members and councillors. The proposed structure is illustrated at paragraph 7.3. Officers from the housing management providers and Lewisham Council will be in attendance. The Joint Partnership Board will be a strategic group and will:

- Review the performance of Lewisham Homes, Regenta B3 and Dunlop Hayward;
- Agree consultation processes for the Council's responsibilities e.g. rent setting, allocations and decant policies and the operation of Homesearch;
- Review the progress of Lewisham Homes, Regenta B3 and Dunlop Hayward against their Business Plans; and
- Receive reports from groups such as Area Panels, Leaseholder Groups, Residents' Sounding Board and make recommendations arising from these.

7.2 For Lewisham Homes, resident membership is drawn from Area Panels and special interest groups. Membership from the other management provider areas will be from their area panels and other established groups.

7.3 The provisional structure for resident involvement outlined in the Residents' Charter is illustrated below:



8. Lewisham Homes and the Residents' Charter

- 8.1 As part of Lewisham Homes core objective to promote strong community involvement, improved services and customer satisfaction, Lewisham Homes have been consulting with residents over the terms of a new Tenant Participation Compact.
- 8.2 Building on the foundations of the existing compact the Lewisham Homes working group have developed a draft Resident's Charter, which has now been taken forward. The Residents' Charter is attached at appendix one.
- 8.3 The Charter aims to make involvement inclusive and flexible by providing residents with a variety of options and levels of engagement. This allows individual residents to determine how, when and to what level they want to be involved.
- 8.4 The structure of Residents' Charter consists of a Residents Sounding Board, which is open to all Lewisham Homes residents. It asks residents to express their interests and preferred ways of getting involved. Residents can be contacted and invited to participate in surveys, focus groups, special interest groups and email discussion groups which can be tailored to their preferences. Lewisham Homes will promote the Residents' Sounding Board to all sections of the community and can use this to target hard to reach or under represented groups to ensure the views of all sections are captured and used to drive improvements.
- 8.5 The Charter aims to tackle barriers to involvement by, for example, proactively contacting faith and community groups, promoting activities that bring communities together, using a range of formats for communication and providing relevant support such as training, transport and assistance with caring responsibilities to enable people to get involved. The Charter also encourages the creation of special interest groups to influence the development of specific service areas such as communications.
- 8.6 Lewisham Homes Residents' Charter proposes two Area panels – for the North and South. These reflect the management arrangements in Lewisham Homes. Membership is open to representatives from TRAs, TMOs and sheltered schemes in the area. Residents were keen that a Lewisham Homes Board member attends each area panel to learn first hand of concerns from residents and this is included in the Charter. Panels have in the past prioritised small schemes and funding from the aerial allocations in their areas and residents were keen that this should continue in future.
- 8.7 The Charter supports existing tenants and residents associations and promotes new ones. There are currently 14 accredited tenants and residents associations covering Lewisham Homes properties in the north of the borough and 12 in the south.

9 Other Housing Management Providers – Regenter B3 and Dunlop Hayward

- 9.1 The Brockley PFI project covers the management of 1344 tenanted and 503 leasehold properties. Regenter B3 is the management consortium for homes in Brockley and began its contract on 4th September 2007.
- 9.2 The Chrysalis area ranging from Forest Hill and Sydenham in the west to Catford South and Rushey Green in the east covers 2392 tenanted and 1156 leasehold properties. Council officers are currently investigating stock transfer as a possible solution to the investment need in the area. In the interim, Dunlop Hayward continue to manage the homes under a contract.
- 9.3 Dunlop Hayward and Regenter B3 are responsible for maximising the level of resident involvement and influence on services.
- 9.4 Under the terms of their contracts for tenant participation, the Housing Management providers are required to:
- Provide and promote a range of opportunities for tenants and leaseholders to comment on the services delivered by the Contractor in order to maximise resident involvement and feedback;
 - Set up formal consultation and decision-making mechanisms with residents in the area in order to maximise the level of influence that residents have on service delivery; and
 - Work in accordance with Lewisham’s Tenant Participation Compact.
- 9.5 It is expected that both housing management providers will sign up to the Residents’ Charter as the new framework for resident involvement. Council officers have attended resident meetings at Dunlop Hayward and Regenter B3 to discuss the proposed Residents’ Charter. There was support from residents of both areas for the Joint Partnership Board at the final Tenants Strategy Group meeting held on 24th January 2007.
- 9.6 A number of issues were raised by Dunlop Hayward and Regenter B3 including whether they could develop wider forms of participation than TRAs for example, their own Residents’ Sounding Board or Special Interest Groups. It was agreed that a pragmatic approach was needed as the areas managed by Dunlop Hayward and Regenter B3 are not as big as Lewisham Homes. It is proposed that Lewisham Council officers work with both housing management providers to develop their consultation structures underneath the proposed Joint Partnership Board to ensure involvement is maximised.

10. Consultation

- 10.1 The proposals for the new Residents’ Charter have been subject to extensive consultation with residents across the borough through their respective TRA’s, through the Lewisham Homes Customer Panel and through the Dunlop Hayward and Regenta B3 area panels. The proposals were reviewed by the Tenants Strategy Group in January 2008 and there is broad support for the proposed Joint Partnership Board structure among both residents and housing management partners.

- 10.2 The Residents' Charter will be subject to annual review in order that it evolves to suit the changing management arrangements in the Borough.

11. Links with residents of housing associations

- 11.1 The Council also wishes to develop mechanisms to engage with residents of housing associations and will explore how best to achieve this with all the housing providers in the borough. We will monitor the quality of resident involvement of all Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) in Lewisham, and encourage RSLs to help their residents engage in a variety of borough-wide involvement initiatives.

12. Legal Implications

- 12.1 Under section 105 of the Housing Act 1985 the Council has a statutory duty to maintain and publish arrangements for consulting with its secure tenants on matters of housing management. 'Housing management' is defined as the management, maintenance, improvement or demolition of dwellings, lets on secure tenancies, and includes the provision of services or amenities in connection with such dwellings.
- 12.2 The outcome of the Council's consultation arrangements will be reflected in the new Residents' Charter.

13. Financial Implications

- 13.1 All costs for resident involvement are approved within the contracts with the housing management providers. No further resources should be required.

14. Human Resources Implications

- 14.1 There are no human resources implications for this report.

15. Equality Implications

- 15.1 The proposed Residents' Charter will encourage participation from across the tenant and leasehold community of Lewisham Homes, Dunlop Hayward and Regenter B3. The Residents' Charter also provides mechanisms for informal as well as formal consultation realising that not all residents want to, or cannot communicate with their respective provider in the same way. The Council, in its clienting role will review the mechanisms for consultation to ensure opportunities are maximised and no groups are adversely impacted by the new structures.
- 15.2 Lewisham Homes has carried out an Equalities Impact Assessment on the Charter and concludes that it is a more open and accessible framework for resident involvement.

16. Environmental Implications

16.1 The remit of the Area Panels and the Joint Partnership Board will be to review the performance of environmental services on a local and borough-wide basis.

17. Crime and Disorder Implications

17.1 Anti-social behaviour is a key concern of Lewisham's residents. The proposed Joint Partnership Board will give tenants and leaseholders from all housing management areas the opportunity to voice concerns and ensure that appropriate action is enforced and good practice shared.

18. Conclusion

18.1 Resident involvement is crucial if our housing management providers are to succeed in delivering constant improvement in the services they deliver, offering residents choice wherever possible and doing all that we can, together, to maintain (or create) neighbourhoods that people want to live in.

Background Papers

Title Document	Date	Location
Decent Homes update	Mayor and Cabinet 9 November 2005	5th Floor Laurence House
Decent Homes Strategy	Full Council 29 June 2005	5th Floor Laurence House
Decent Homes Strategy	Mayor and Cabinet 8 June 2005	5th Floor Laurence House
Housing Stock Option Appraisal - Overarching strategy	Full Council 15 December 2004	5th Floor Laurence House
Sustainable Communities: Building for the future	5 February 2003	Department for Communities & Local Government
Lewisham's Tenant Participation Compact	October 2002	5 th Floor, Laurence House

For more information on this report please contact Janet Sutherland, Strategic Housing & Regulatory Services – on 020 8314 6057.

Appendix One – Proposed Residents’ Charter