

MUNICIPAL YEAR 2006/2007 REPORT NO. 186

MEETING TITLE AND DATE:
Cabinet – 13.12.2006

REPORT OF:
Director of Performance,
Partnership & Policy

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Agenda – Part:1	Item: 12
Subject: Housing Resident Involvement strategy	
Wards:	All
Cabinet Member consulted: Cllr Mathew Laban	

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents Enfield Homes' Resident Involvement Strategy 2006-11 – *people like you..... making a difference* which has been developed following consultation with individual residents and resident's groups and key partners such as FECA.

The report briefly explains the context for preparing the strategy, the consultation process undertaken and sets out the overall vision and objectives of the strategy for the next 5 years. The report provides an opportunity for Cabinet to agree the vision and objectives outlined for the new strategy.

Further work is being done to develop the action plan which will ensure the delivery of the year 1 priorities for the strategy and Enfield Homes shadow board has set up a working group with residents to oversee the implementation of the strategy.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That Cabinet agrees the overall vision and objectives for the resident involvement strategy and agrees the way forward for finalising the strategy

3. BACKGROUND

From April 2007 Enfield Homes, will be responsible for resident involvement in the landlord services although they will continue to work with the Council to ensure residents can influence all aspects of housing. The creation of Enfield Homes and a successful bid will provide a unique opportunity to involve residents at all levels of decision-making including as members of the board of directors Residents will be able to influence a range of decisions including defining the services they want, setting new standards for service delivery and, through the delivery of the Decent Homes programme, to have a say in planning and shaping the wider neighbourhood. The achievement of at least a two star rating by the Audit Commission inspectors at their formal assessment of the services provided by the ALMO in late 2007/early 2008 is key to the success of Enfield Homes. Our ability to demonstrate the successful involvement of residents in a range of decisions and in a variety of ways will be a critical factor in achieving a successful rating.

Enfield Council has a tradition of partnership working with tenants. We have a thriving tenants federation, the Federation of Enfield Community Associations (FECA), with whom we have worked on a number of resident involvement initiatives such as our DVD *people like you... get involved* and planning and running a number of tenant and leaseholder events such as the very successful tenants' and leaseholders' conference in September. However, previous tenants' surveys indicated low levels of tenant satisfaction with opportunities for involvement in decision making and we have been criticised through inspection, review and scrutiny for being over reliant on formal consultation and not involving a wide range of residents in improving services.

It is acknowledged that there are pockets of good practice, for example inspectors praised the review of repairs and maintenance for the ways in which we had involved residents in shaping policy and services and the recent initiative to develop a consultative pool of interested residents called the NETWORK has been commended. We also involved residents in our stock options appraisal and the resulting creation of Enfield Homes has meant residents are taking decisions and influencing services at the highest levels.

The Enfield Homes resident involvement strategy builds on established good practice, but seeks to move away from an over reliance on formal structures and groups as the sole means of consultation to a more flexible approach to consultation and involvement that suits the needs of more of its residents.

Developing the strategy

The objectives and principles of the strategy have evolved through out the course of a series of consultation events carried out throughout this year including

- A training event in January with residents, councillors and officers where we explored a number of options for our model of involvement, looking at the layers of decision making and developing a menu of opportunities for resident involvement at all levels of decision making.

- a series of road shows in various venues around the borough, promoting the shadow board selection process and asking people how they would like to have their say about Enfield Homes.

- two half day workshops, facilitated by Angela Wheeler a consultant with Housing Quality Network, at which we agreed the principles that the strategy is based on, the lifetime of the strategy and who would be involved in delivering it.
- two workshops at the Tenants' and Leaseholders' conference on September 21st
- a final workshop on 23rd October with residents and staff to draft the action plan that would set down the next steps in developing the strategy further and the key actions for implementation of the strategy during the next 18 months.

Vision and objectives

Residents feedback from the roadshows and workshop, informed the vision. They said they wanted to be asked about things that impact on them, the majority didn't want to join groups or sit on committees, but they did want to be asked and most importantly they wanted to see how what they said influenced change.

The strategy vision states that.....

We believe that resident involvement means everyone working together to enable the customers of the services to influence the management and maintenance of their homes and estates. This means residents, staff and decision makers from the Enfield Homes board and the Council working together towards common goals.

We believe that residents should have real influence over the decisions that are made about their homes, their tenancies, the policies, local services and the environment in which they live. We believe that opportunities to influence decision making at all levels should be available to residents in ways that ensure equality of opportunity and meet individual needs.

We believe that an effective partnership must include:

Customers	Service provider	Landlord
All residents living in our homes and receiving the services Members of the Federation of Enfield Community Associations (FECA) and residents associations Members of other active residents groups across the borough such as the Leaseholder Panel and Sheltered Housing Forum	Enfield Homes staff dedicated to supporting resident involvement Enfield Homes staff providing the front line services Enfield Homes staff managing the service delivery Enfield Homes Senior Managers Enfield Homes Board members Enfield Homes area boards members Other agencies working in the Borough	LB Enfield Councillors LB Enfield officers

To achieve this we will plan to

- increase and diversify the methods for engagement increased opportunities for traditionally hard to reach groups to be involved and encourage resident involvement at a level that suits each individual
- develop real partnership working between Enfield Homes and its stakeholders
- achieve excellence in resident involvement against inspection criteria
- achieve consistent improvement in levels of satisfaction
- engage with residents who reflect the profile of our local communities.
- empower residents to take the lead and drive ideas forward
- improve communications internally and externally
- provide relevant and suitable support to deliver the strategy
- provide relevant and suitable resources to support the strategy
- facilitate the development of sustainable partnerships with organisations and agencies outside the Council and Enfield Homes to support engagement in the community and the environment where our residents live

The action plan

The strategy will be delivered through an action plan which is being developed with staff and residents. Key activities will include a review of internal structures and resources to ensure that resident involvement is supported and mainstreamed throughout the organisation; revision of service plans to emphasise the requirement for managers to outline how they plan to involve residents in improving services; further development of the NETWORK as a key resource in engaging and empowering residents; developing the capacity of the Core group to fulfil its challenge function and as a co-ordinating forum for consultation.

Finalising the strategy

It is proposed that Cabinet endorse the vision and objectives and that the shadow board receives comments on the final draft strategy document for incorporation into the final document which will form part of the Enfield Homes Delivery Plan.

Monitoring arrangements

The strategy will span a 5 year timeframe, but will be reviewed annually with a major review after 3 years to ensure it is still fit for purpose.

Enfield Homes shadow board are in the process of setting up a working group to oversee the completion of the strategy document and monitor the action plan to ensure the implementation of the strategy as agreed. Invitations have been extended to FECA, the Core group, the Sheltered Housing Forum and the Leaseholder Panel to join the working group which will focus on the following key actions

- The development of the consultative model
- The development and implementation of the Enfield Homes area boards and other decision making bodies
- Self assessment against the resident involvement Key Lines of Enquiry

The strategy will form part of the Enfield Homes delivery plan which will be a key monitoring tool for the Council.

4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

No alternative was considered, whilst there is not statutory requirement to have a resident involvement strategy, it is widely acknowledged to be good practice and inspectors would have an expectation that we would have one in place.

5. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

There is a need for resident influence on decision-making and involvement in improving services to be mainstreamed within the landlord services. The strategy will build on existing structures and areas of good practice to develop a coherent and coordinated approach to this

6. COMMENTS OF THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND CORPORATE RESOURCES AND OTHER DEPARTMENTS

6.1 Financial Implications

The financial resources required to deliver the resident involvement action plan will be considered at a later date as part of the negotiation of the ALMO management fee.

6.2 Legal Implications

The Council has no statutory duty to produce a resident involvement strategy, however, under the Local Government Act 1999, the Council has a statutory duty to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its' functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness. The development of the resident strategy and delegation of the responsibility for delivering the strategy to Enfield Homes will assist the Council in discharging that duty.

7. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

Effective resident involvement will be a critical factor in achieving a 2 or 3 star rating when Enfield Homes is inspected in late 2007/early 2008. The resident involvement strategy will support the Enfield Homes Delivery Plan which will set out how Enfield Homes will meet the Council's targets for delivering its housing strategic objectives in relation to the landlord services and will be a key monitoring tool.

8. PUTTING ENFIELD FIRST

Involving residents in improving services and shaping their neighbourhoods will contribute to Aim 5 supporting the delivery of excellent services and Aim 6 economically successful and socially inclusive.

Background Papers

Final draft resident involvement strategy held by Kate Tordoff

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