

East Kent Housing

Proposed new formal resident involvement structure

Overview and Scrutiny Panel	25 January 2018
Report Author	Matt Gough, East Kent Housing, Director of Customer Services
Portfolio Holder	Councillor Rev. Stuart Piper, Cabinet member for Housing and Open Spaces
Status	For Information and commend on the recommendations
Classification:	Unrestricted
Key Decision	No
Ward:	Thanet wide

Executive Summary:

This report sets out the detail developed in partnership with residents to support the proposed new formal resident involvement structure and support the effective involvement of residents in our housing services. The purpose of this report is to seek comments from Thanet District Councils Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Residents have been supported by East Kent Housing (EKH) and an Independent Advisor to develop the proposed new structure and the following documents which set out the structure detail;

- New Resident Panel Terms of Reference
- New Local Groups Terms of Reference
- Revised Code of conduct
- New Relationship and communication between groups
- Role descriptions

This report sets out:

- The proposed new structure;
- Summary of the recommendations as set out in the appended documents;
- Proposed implementation timeframe.

Recommendation(s):

Members are requested to:

- Consider this report, structure and appendices;
- Endorse the recommendation to invite and appropriate Councillor(s) to attend local group meetings to participate and observe, in relation to local council services;
- Note the proposed implementation timescales.

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

Financial and Value for Money

There are no financial implications arising directly from the report or implementation of the proposed new resident involvement structure

Legal	<p>The proposals would require an amendment to the Management Agreement which are set out in section 4 of this report</p> <p>The recommended new resident involvement continues to meet the HCA's Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard and Housing Act.</p>								
Corporate	The proposals to improve resident involvement structures support the corporate value of promoting open communications.								
Equality Act 2010 & Public Sector Equality Duty	<p>Members are reminded of the requirement, under the Public Sector Equality Duty (section 149 of the Equality Act 2010) to have due regard to the aims of the Duty at the time the decision is taken. The aims of the Duty are: (i) eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act, (ii) advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it, and (iii) foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.</p> <p>Protected characteristics: age, gender, disability, race, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, religion or belief and pregnancy & maternity. Only aim (i) of the Duty applies to Marriage & civil partnership.</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td colspan="2">Please indicate which aim is relevant to the report.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act,</td> <td style="text-align: center;">✓</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.</td> <td style="text-align: center;">✓</td> </tr> </table> <p>There are no equality issues arising directly from this report but there is a need to retain a strong focus and understanding on issues of diversity amongst the residents engaged in housing services. The reviewed code of conduct (appendix 3) supports equality. An equalities impact assessment will be carried out before the proposals are agreed.</p>	Please indicate which aim is relevant to the report.		Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act,	✓	Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it		Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.	✓
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CORPORATE PRIORITIES (tick those relevant)✓	
A clean and welcoming Environment	
Promoting inward investment and job creation	
Supporting neighbourhoods	✓

CORPORATE VALUES (tick those relevant)✓	
Delivering value for money	
Supporting the Workforce	
Promoting open communications	✓

1.0 Introduction and Background

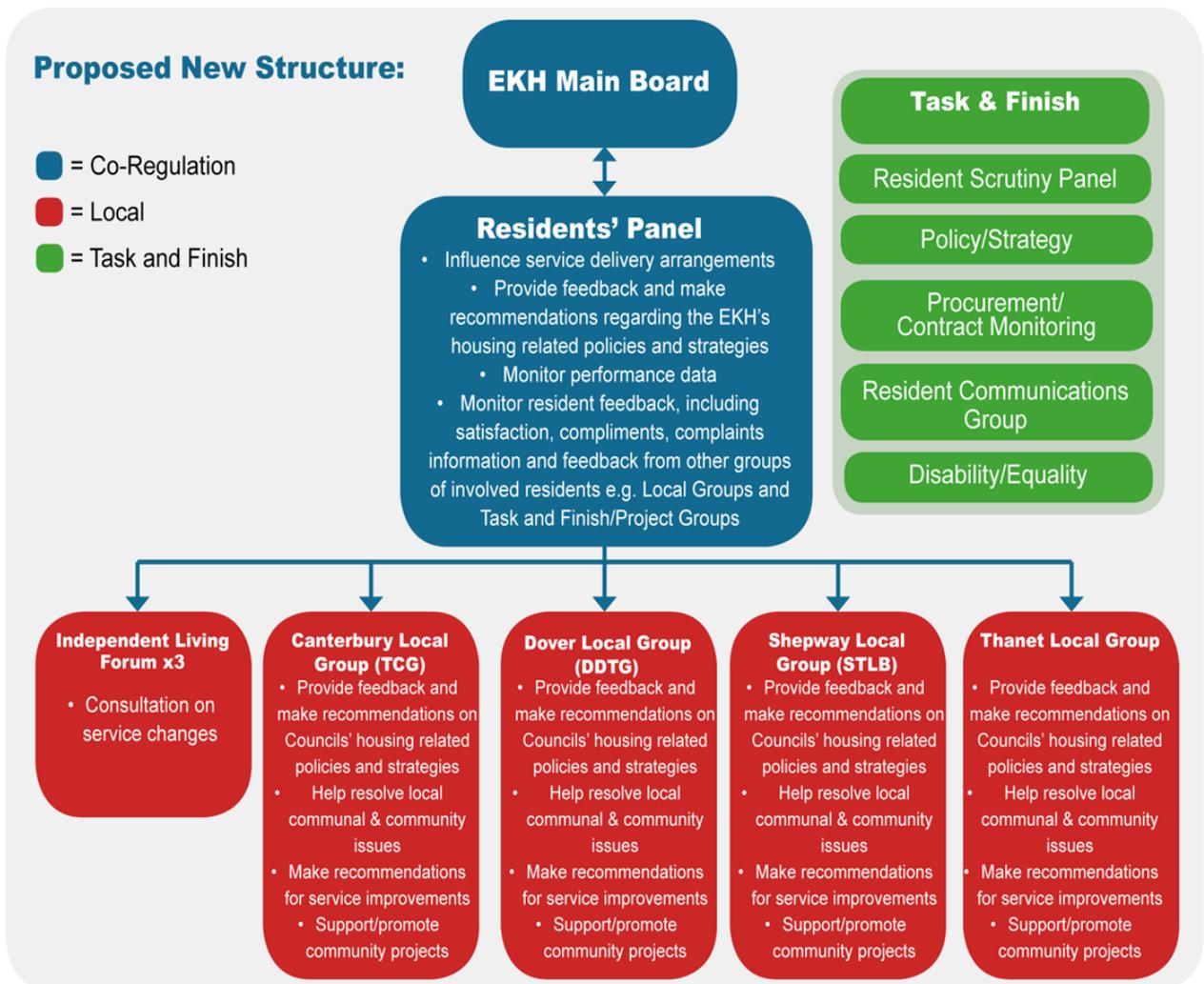
- 1.1 East Kent Housing currently has a formal resident involvement structure which has four area boards (one for each council area), four residents on the main EKH Board (one from each council area) and four local groups (one for each area) which tend to consider the same information as the area boards. It also has a tenant scrutiny panel, and a communications group, all made up of residents, and a Service Improvement sub-committee, also involving residents.
- 1.2 The Tenant Scrutiny Panel (TSP) carried out a review of the formal resident involvement structure and provided recommendations which included:-
- I. A residents panel 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.

2.0 Detail

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



2.1 Residents' Panel (Terms of reference – Appendix 1)

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. 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 local groups, area panel 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 tenant's 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.

2.2 Role of Local Groups (Terms of reference – Appendix 2)

The role of the local groups has been considered and the new terms of reference have been set out within Appendix 2 and are 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, 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.

2.3 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.

2.4 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.

2.5 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.

3.0 Consultation planned or undertaken

Extensive work has been undertaken with engaged residents. 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.

4.0 Wording amendment to the Management Agreement

East Kent Housing manage the Housing Revenue Account stock on behalf of Thanet District Council, the details of this agreement are set out within a Management Agreement. The agreement sets out responsibilities and obligations on both organisations and whilst the responsibility for resident involvement is the responsibility the agreement makes reference to the current structure. In order for the agreement to reflect the proposed structure it is proposed that the agreement be revised to reflect the proposed changes. The details of the proposed changes are set out below:-

- Section 4 Tenant and Leaseholder Involvement;
Substitute 'Area Board' with 'Residents' Panel';
- Section 13 Consultation with statutory and other bodies;
Substitute 'Area Board' with 'Residents' Panel/Local Groups'.

Section 63 of the Management Agreement makes provision for the council to make variations to the management agreement from time to time and give reasonable notice of the variations to East Kent Housing.

In order for these changes to be made the proposals will need to be implemented as set out below.

5.0 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.

The Resident Involvement Team 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 (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 (Jan – Feb).

Contact Officer:	Michelle Thomas, East Kent Housing, Resident Involvement Manager Telephone: 01304 872410
Reporting to:	Matt Gough, East Kent Housing, Director of Customer Services

Annex List

Annex 1	Residents' Panel Terms of Reference
Annex 2	Local Groups Terms of Reference
Annex 3	Resident Involvement Code of Conduct
Annex 4	New Relationship and Communication between groups
Annex 5	Role Descriptions

Corporate Consultation

Finance	Ramesh Prashar, Head of Financial Services
Legal	Sophia Nartey, Interim Head of Legal Services
Housing	Bob Porter, Head of Housing