



To: Executive Councillor for Housing:  
Councillor Kevin Price

Report by: Liz Bisset

Relevant scrutiny committee: Housing Scrutiny Committee 1/7/2014

Wards affected: All wards containing Council housing

## **RESIDENT INVOLVEMENT UPDATE**

### **Not a Key Decision**

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## **1. Executive summary**

An annual Resident Involvement update, focusing on:

- Volunteer recruitment
- Digital inclusion
- Complaints resolution
- HSC Tenant and Leaseholder representatives allowances

## **2. Recommendations**

The Executive Councillor is recommended:

**2.1** To approve the on-going focus of resident involvement on volunteer recruitment, digital inclusion and complaints resolution.

**2.2** To approve the increase of the HSC Tenant & Leaseholder representative allowances.

## **3. Background**

### **3.1 Volunteer Recruitment**

**3.1.1** Cambridge City Council has a long tradition of involving tenants and leaseholders in the management and scrutiny of their housing service.

**3.1.2** The reduction in top-down regulation from central government has put a greater emphasis on social landlords regulating themselves. This kind of regulation only works if council tenants and leaseholders are invited to be part of that system. This opportunity is offered through three specific areas:

- Making Big Decisions
- Quality of the Home
- Estate & Community

**3.1.3** The various groups, panels and roles are outlined in the leaflet '3 Easy Ways To Have Your Say' (appendix 1).

**3.1.4** In order for these platforms to continue to be effective, they need new volunteers. This is why the current focus of Resident Involvement is on outreach work to recruit and train newly involved tenants and leaseholders.

## **3.2: Digital Inclusion**

**3.2.1** The internet is now one of the preferred ways for people to engage with their public services, local community and local democracy. But of the 20% (approx.) of UK households without internet access, around half live in social housing. For many this is due to a combination of cost and lack of training.

**3.2.2** Cambridge City Council have linked with a number of specialist charities to trial the 'Get Online' computer/internet loan scheme for those tenants and leaseholders who are unable to connect through their own means. See the leaflet 'Want to Get Online - It's Easy As 1,2,3' (appendix 2) for more detail.

**3.2.3** The success of the pilot scheme is covered in 'Get Online - Pilot Scheme Report' (appendix 3)

## **3.3 Complaints Resolution**

**3.3.1** To make it more likely that complaints about housing are sorted out locally, and to involve more local people and politicians in this process, the Government has introduced the role of 'designated persons'. A designated person can be an MP, a local Councillor, or a Tenant Panel. Tenant Panels must be 'recognised' by the landlord.

**3.3.2** If a tenant (or leaseholder) remains unsatisfied with the outcome of a complaint at the conclusion of the landlord's complaints process, they may submit their complaint to a councillor, an MP, or a Tenant Panel.

**3.3.3** Cambridge City Council is currently exploring a model for a local tenant complaint panel. A report on this will be coming to HSC for discussion in the Autumn.

### 3.4 Tenant and Leaseholder Representatives allowances

**3.4.1** HSC Tenant and Leaseholder representatives have traditionally received 6-monthly allowances for their time. These amounts were set over 10 years ago and have never been reviewed or increased - even for inflation.

**3.4.2** It is recommended that the HSC Tenant and Leaseholder representative allowances be increased by 10% annually, for the next 4 years:

Current	July 2014	April 2015	April 2016	April 2017
<b>A £400</b>	£440	£484	£532	£585
<b>B £200</b>	£220	£242	£266	£292
<b>C £100</b>	£110	£121	£133	£146

**3.4.3** From 2018 onwards, it is recommended that these amounts be reviewed annually.

## 4. Implications

- (a) **Financial Implications** – All work detailed above is covered within the existing Resident Involvement budget
- (b) **Staffing Implications** - This work is part of the routine duties of existing staff.
- (c) **Equality and Poverty Implications** - Advances equal opportunities by granting internet access to the unemployed, elderly and disabled
- (d) **Environmental Implications** - Nil
- (e) **Procurement** - Nil
- (f) **Consultation and communication** – All tenants and leaseholders were consulted on whether they wanted a tenant complaints panel (via Open Door magazine).
- (g) **Community Safety** - Nil

## 5. Background papers

These background papers were used in the preparation of this report:

## 6. Appendices

**Appendix 1** - 3 Easy Ways To Have Your Say

**Appendix 2 - Want to Get Online? It's Easy As 1,2,3**

**Appendix 3 - Get Online - Pilot Scheme Report**

## **7. Inspection of papers**

To inspect the background papers or if you have a query on the report please contact:

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