

Cabinet/Committee:	Tenants and Leaseholders Consultative Forum
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Subject:	Tenant Compact
Responsible Officer:	Gwyneth Allen Head of Housing
Portfolio Holder:	Housing
Exempt:	No

SECTION 1 – SUMMARY

This report sets out to provide information to TLCF on the review of the Tenants' and Leaseholders' Compact.

FOR INFORMATION

SECTION 2 – REPORT

2.1 Brief History

2.1.1 Operating the principles and arrangements agreed in the Compact in its relationships and dealings with tenants and leaseholders, will assist in improving the Audit Commission best value performance indicators, BVPI75a 'Satisfaction of tenants of council housing with opportunities for participation-

all tenants' for Harrow. The performance figures for 2005-2006 show the top 25% of local authorities and housing organisations achieved 72% satisfaction rate whereas Harrow's results for this indicator currently stands at 57%.

- 2.1.2 By following the commitment given by the Council to review the effectiveness of the Compact every six months, we will ensure one of the primary aims of the Compact is met i.e. that Harrow Council's tenants and leaseholders are involved in shaping, influencing, monitoring and directly controlling the services that Harrow Council's Housing Management and Repair Service provides.
- 2.1.3 Minor changes to the Compact as a result of 6 monthly reviews can be communicated to tenants and leaseholders through the Council's Homing In magazine so the cost is negligible.
- 2.1.4 Production and distribution of a summary of the Compact to be sent to all tenants and leaseholders is underway. There will be a stockpile of additional copies to be handed to each new tenant at each tenancy sign up.
- 2.1.5 The ODPM (now Department of Communities and Local Government DCLG) introduced Compacts in 1999. This was part of the Government's agenda to improve local services, build civil renewal and strengthen and sustain local communities. Harrow introduced their Compact in 2000 and this is the first review of Harrow Council's Compact since that date.
- 2.1.6 The review of Harrow's Compact has also stemmed from the fact the Government introduced a revised 'National Framework for Tenant Participation Compacts' in March 2005. The then Minister for Housing, Keith Hill commented "Where Compacts are working well they are living documents that place tenants at the heart of decision making and service delivery. However this is not happening everywhere. The revised framework therefore provides the opportunity for councils and tenants to review and improve their compact and to incorporate updated guidance." "For tenants to be at the heart of service improvements, landlords must be fully committed to the principles of the compact at the corporate level. This will

ensure that tenant involvement is properly integrated and resourced and the values of the compact are embedded throughout the organisation”.

2.1.7 The latest research published in the National Framework document shows that better-performing councils embed tenant involvement throughout their organisation, although it also states that organisations should avoid getting too weighed down with process. It is important to guard against the problem of making the process of implementing and reviewing Compacts into an ‘industry’ in itself.

2.2 Consultation

2.2.1 Harrow’s Compact was revised and updated by Officers in line with the national framework guidelines and the revised draft version was presented to the Residents Empowerment Working Group on 22nd June 2006. Tenant representatives at that meeting expressed the view that they had not been involved in the review and wanted time to go through the Compact in more detail.

2.2.2 Officers arranged a for a full days consultation meeting to go through the Compact and invited the chairs of all tenants associations to this session. An independent Residents’ Advisor from First Call Housing was also asked to attend. This took place on 24th July and proved to be a lively session with many useful comments and suggestions being made by residents, which were noted by Officers. By the end of the day it was clear than another full day’s consultation session would be needed since only half the content of the Compact had been covered in the time allowed.

2.2.3 The final session with residents was arranged and held on 2nd August, which again resulted in enthusiastic, positive and lively debate. All comments were again noted by Officers and the feedback from both the July and August sessions were combined into the draft Compact.

2.2.4 Consultations with housing management and maintenance staff took place on 12th September and 25th September. A separate consultation session was arranged for the afternoon of 25th

September to which Councillors were invited. However only one Councillor turned up for the session and expressed the view that he would prefer a joint session on the Compact with other Councillors, staff and residents.

2.3 Monitoring of the Compact

2.3.1 Taking into account the comments in paragraph 2.1.2 above, Officers will invite a group of tenants, leaseholders and elected members to a meeting every six months to review the effectiveness of the Action Plan 2006-2009 as detailed in the Compact. A report detailing the feedback from these meetings will be presented to the TLCF on a six monthly basis.

2.3.2 Translation of the full copy of the Compact, including a large print version will be available on request.

SECTION 3 – FURTHER INFORMATION

The shortened version of the Tenant Compact is attached.

SECTION 4 - CONTACT DETAILS AND BACKGROUND PAPERS

Contact: Gwyneth Allen, Head of Housing 0208 424 1998

Background Papers: None.