

Meeting:	Tenants' and Leaseholders' Consultative Forum
Date:	Thursday 6 January 2005
Subject:	Options Appraisal
Responsible Officer:	Acting Head of Housing Services
Contact Officer:	Acting Tenant Services Manager
Portfolio Holder:	Planning, Development, Housing and Best Value Portfolio Holder
Key Decision:	No
Status:	Public

Section 1: Summary

Decision Required

1.1 That the report be noted.

Reason for report

1.2 This report provides information on the Option Appraisal process the Council must undertake by July 2005.

Benefits

1.3 Not Applicable

Cost of Proposals

1.4 The costs of the Options Appraisal process will be met from existing resources.

Risks

1.5 Not Applicable

Implications if recommendations rejected

1.6 Not applicable

Section 2: Report

2.1 Brief History

The Council completed a financial and stock appraisal of options for the management and improvement of its stock in 2000. This highlighted that the best option for the Council was to set up an arms length management organisation (ALMO).

Financial regulations changed in April 2004, allowing the Council to borrow money to carry out works to its properties. This option appears to be better value for money and may also mean that more work to improve the environment on our estates could be undertaken. Cabinet took a decision in November 2004 not to proceed with the ALMO option and to examine prudential borrowing in greater detail.

Because we are now looking at this different option, the Government requires the Council to revisit its options appraisal and re-evaluate its stock condition and finances. Residents need to be involved all the way through the process to ensure any decisions taken about the future of the stock are the right ones. This process must be completed by July 2005.

What is involved with the project?

- Evaluation of council housing stock to determine what improvements are needed and where
- Evaluation of options for different estates and to ensure any improvements take into account the wishes of local residents
- Financial options appraisal to determine the best method of funding the work the Council needs to do.
- Tenant and resident empowerment and participation throughout the process, including developing a communications strategy and tenant empowerment strategy with residents and communicating regularly through newsletters and meetings
- The appointment of an independent tenant advisor to work with residents in assessing the options and to ensure all residents, including those from hard to reach groups, are included

Who will be involved?

- Officers
- Members
- Tenant and resident representatives
- Stakeholders, for example housing associations
- Independent Tenant Advisor
- Options Appraisal consultant to carry out the financial appraisal
- Community Housing Task Force and Government Office for London to oversee the process and agree the final document

Lead Officer responsibilities will be as follows:

- Anna Robinson – Delivery of the approved option appraisal by the end July 2005 and ongoing reporting to the Member Panel (see below), Government Office for London and Community Housing Task Force
- Rebecca Caprara – Management of the consultation process, management of consultants, communications, coordination of the option assessments for working group consideration
- Alison Pegg – Social inclusion & area renewal strategies and action plans; decent homes standards and resident involvement specification, estate options evaluation
- Gwyneth Allen – Stock condition survey, analysis and reports
- Simon Waple – ALMO audit information; financial appraisals of options

2.2 Options considered

Not applicable

2.3 Consultation

Not applicable in relation to this report but the Options Appraisal process will, as detailed above, require extensive consultation.

2.4 Financial Implications

The costs of the Options Appraisal process will be met from existing resources.

2.5 Legal Implications

None in respect of the recommendation for this report

2.6 Equalities Impact

None

Section 3: Supporting Information/ Background Documents

For further information, please contact:

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Information about options appraisals can also be found on the ODPM website at www.odpm.gov.uk under the housing section

Ian C Brown
Acting Head of Housing Services