
Report of Chief Officer of Housing Management

Report to Environment, Housing and Communities Scrutiny Board

Date: 15 January 2018

Subject: Housing Advisory Panel (HAP) Review - Initial Proposals

Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

Summary of main issues

1. The Environment, Housing and Communities Scrutiny Board supported a review of Housing Advisory Panels (HAPs) in April 2017.
2. A review scope was established that aimed to ensure HAPs are relevant and connected to wider communities, have strengthened links with Community Committees, reflect wider effort to tackle Priority Neighbourhoods and maximise value for money.
3. Consultation took place with Ward Members, HAP Members, tenants, residents, staff teams and community groups during autumn 2017. The key outcomes of the consultation are summarised within this report.
4. These outcomes are now being used to finalise proposals for the future of HAPs prior to implementation on the 1 April 2018.

Recommendations

5. That the Environment, Housing and Communities Scrutiny Board give comment on the outcomes of the consultation, to inform the development of final proposals for the future of HAPs prior to implementation from April 2018.

1 Purpose of this report

- 1.1 To share with the Environment, Housing and Communities Scrutiny Board the key outcomes from the review of HAPs.

2 Background information

- 2.1 An outline of the Tenant Engagement Framework was shared with the Environment, Housing and Communities Scrutiny Board at a Tenant Engagement themed workshop in April 2017. This workshop supported a review of HAPs, as well as making a number of recommendations to build relationships between the Scrutiny Board and key strategic tenant forums.
- 2.2 A review of the Tenant Engagement Framework as a whole took place during 2016/17, however, HAPs were not reviewed at this time due to the Council's Locality Review and the clear local focus of HAP activity.
- 2.3 The scope of the HAP review addresses four themes:
- How do we ensure that HAPs are connected to and more relevant to local communities and the wider tenant base?
 - How do we strengthen links between HAPs and Community Committees?
 - How should the HAPs link to the Priority Wards and Priority Neighbourhoods?
 - How do we maximise value for money from the HAPs?
- 2.4 Consultation exploring the four themes included:
- 2nd October - A city-wide gathering of 28 HAP members at a workshop event seeking views from as many HAP members as possible.
 - w/c 16th October – the launch of an online and paper based survey, shared with local Councillors, existing HAP members, Tenants and Residents Association Committee Members and community groups that have approached local HAPs for funding at any point during since April 2016. There have been 77 respondents to date.
 - 17th October – a Ward Member Briefing, attended by 21 Ward Members to consider and respond to the themes of the review.
 - Various dates – engagement with various teams and services that have some form of contact with their local HAPs or support HAP activity, including the East, South and West Community Committee Teams.
- 2.5 Throughout the review officers have engaged with a small number of volunteer HAP members to help shape the consultation process, designing the survey and tenant workshop elements.
- 2.6 The HAP review timetable now gives opportunity to refine and develop initial proposals ahead of implementation from 1 April 2018.

3 Main issues

3.1 The main outcomes from the HAP review consultation are as follows:

3.2 Theme 1 – HAPs connecting and relevancy to local communities and the wider tenant base

3.3 The consultation feedback demonstrated strong support for HAPs to develop more informal ways of working; appealing and involving more residents (especially younger residents) in decision making and in influencing their priorities:

- Broaden decision making - reduce formality of HAP meetings, for example, by encouraging rotating Chairs, removing requirement to 'interview' new members, and more tailored/targeted recruitment of younger tenants and other under-represented tenants.
- Improve awareness of HAPs amongst younger/working age tenants - developing social media (Twitter hashtags), promoting and engaging with existing groups and activities that already take place in communities (adopting a 'go to them' approach)
- Ensure wider resident input into HAP funded projects – consultation with a wider range of tenants on local groups e.g. TARA Committee members, sharing proposals on social media and engaging with existing community social media groups and making better use of local knowledge of Housing Teams in response to tenant feedback.
- Support HAPs to engage with younger tenants and families, e.g. inviting local schools to propose community priorities and projects, connecting and developing ideas with existing local groups or services in that area already who are already involving younger people and families.
- More informal ways of working – widen the opportunity for sharing, learning, networking and celebrating success amongst all HAP members by holding three/four citywide HAP forums, replacing the current Cross City Chairs Group.
- Jointly develop more localised performance reporting connected to housing or strategic priorities – sharing statistics on crime, anti-social behaviour, internet access, financial exclusion, local estate management information, like how teams are responding to estate walkabouts or action day activity and outcomes, rather than current KPI focus.
- To change the name to something that better reflects the HAPs role and ambitions to engage with residents more broadly.

3.4 **Theme 2 – Strengthening the link with Community Committees**

3.5 The consultation showed clear support for HAPs and Community Committees to work more closely to agree joint priorities for Council Housing and for these links to be more formalised:

- Move to jointly set local priorities – developing plans on a page with greater emphasis on the place and local priorities.
- Local HAP budgets to be retained within Housing Leeds, but continue to share proposals and exploit opportunities for joint funding with Community Committees and others.
- Providing formal feedback from Housing Leeds to each Community committee – including HAP, wider tenant engagement, local issues and citywide policy development.
- Improve quality and consistency of communication between officers and ward members about HAP project proposals.
- Move the Kirkstall Ward from being within the Inner North West HAP to the Inner West HAP – so becoming the same as local Community Committee boundaries; and reflect the outcomes of the Electoral Commission Boundary Review in any HAP Boundaries from April 2018 onwards.

3.6 **Theme 3 - Links with Priority Wards and Priority Neighbourhoods**

3.7 Whilst consultation feedback acknowledged there were specific and significant problems in Leeds a clear view was expressed that there were places in need of investment in all HAP areas:

- Retain consistent budget application across the city – 50% of funds shared evenly, 50% based on the number of homes in the HAP area (as is the case currently).
- Identify clear priority estates, areas and issues within each HAP area, and ensure HAP funding and service priorities reflect this.

3.8 **Theme 4 - Maximising Value for Money:**

3.9 Consultation supported the service adopt new ways to help achieve greater value for money and the best use of resources:

- Supporting HAPs to ensure resources are spent on key priorities – local flexibility to earmark proportions of budget for specific activity with small budget for reactive, piecemeal work.
- When appropriate or necessary, instigate a commissioning approach – inviting funding applications linked to priorities if risk these aren't being addressed.

- Seek to reduce the number of meetings and do more online.
- Simplify environmental project delivery so that co-ordinated within the 1 team, helping make overall coordination and communication more efficient.
- Explore greater flexibility, especially for lower cost projects, for HAPs to use framework contractors or other external suppliers.

4 Implementation and next steps

4.1 The outcomes of the consultation are being used to develop detailed proposals for the future of HAPs prior to implementation on the 1 April 2018. Proposals will be shared as follows:

- Chairs of the Community Committees on the 25th January 2018.
- Ward Members – ward member briefing / drop in session, allowing more Ward Members the opportunity to attend to be made aware of proposals.
- HAP Members – a citywide HAP meeting to share proposals is currently being planned for mid-January.
- Council teams and services, especially Housing Leeds local housing teams and Communities Teams.

4.2 Officers are now developing an implementation plan, itemising practical next steps. A number of these, for example, how we engage residents more broadly can involve HAP members, and this theme will be workshopped further in the January citywide HAP members event. The Engagement Team will lead on the delivery of any changes ahead of April 2018 and will do so with participation from Communities Teams, Housing Teams and tenants.

5 Corporate Considerations

5.1 Consultation and Engagement

5.2 The HAP review has involved consultation with Ward Members, HAP members, tenants and residents groups, local community groups and organisations and a range of staff teams.

5.3 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration

5.4 An Equality, Diversity, Cohesion and Integration screening has been undertaken which has identified that the decision is not relevant to equality, diversity, cohesion and integration.

5.5 Council policies and Best Council Plan

5.6 The HAP review supports the delivery of the Best Council Plan 2017/18 objective of creating resilient communities - building strong, cohesive communities, raising aspirations, reducing financial hardship and ensuring high quality public services.

5.7 Resources and value for money

5.8 A number of the review outcomes aim to make best use of staffing and budget resources.

5.9 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In

5.10 There are no legal implications related to the decision.

5.11 Risk Management

5.12 The HAP Review aims to ensure that HAPs stay relevant and connected to local communities by tackling the priorities of local tenants. Failure to respond and implement new ways of working risks HAP resources being utilised in non-priority areas or ways, undermining their role and potential positive contribution for tenants and communities as a whole.

6 Conclusions

6.1 A review of HAPs took place during 2017 addressing four themes – to ensure HAPs are relevant and connected to wider communities, to strengthen their links with Community Committees, to consider their role in Priority Neighbourhoods and to achieve greater value for money.

6.2 As part of the review consultation took place with Ward Members, HAP Members and a wider range of tenants, residents and community groups. The main outcomes of the review are summarised within this report. These will be used to develop detailed proposals for the future of HAPs, ahead of the implementation of any new ways of working in April 2018.

7 Recommendations

7.1 That the Environment, Housing and Communities Scrutiny Board give comment on the outcomes of the consultation, to inform the development of final proposals for the future of HAPs prior to implementation from April 2018.

8 Background documents¹

8.1 None

¹ The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the Council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.