

Review of ALMOs and Housing Management Arrangements

SUMMARY OF STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK

70,000 consultation packs were sent out to all tenants and leaseholders with information and a survey form; calls were received through Leeds Tenants Federation and the Contact Centres (990), and emails received through the “YourHomeYourSay” inbox (22)

Additional consultation activity with stakeholders comprised¹ 13 Area Panel meetings (92), three Council staff briefings with Q&A (69), four drop in sessions for elected members, four public meetings (66), thirteen tenant road-show drop-in sessions (101), ten staff conferences (285), three staff workshops (79), one session with Trades Union representatives (6) and twenty four sites visited through mobile tours/drop-in for tenants (113).

1. Tenant Survey

Some 13% of the total tenant population responded to the questionnaire.

- 69.3% strongly agree / agree that the best way to make savings and deliver better and more consistent housing services is to move from three ALMOs to a single organisation.
- 77.5% strongly agree / agree that within a single organisation services should be delivered through locally based teams.
- 60.9% would prefer all housing services to be provided by the Council, compared to 20.9% preferring a single ALMO and 18.2% undecided.

The results show a strong preference from the tenant population for the council to deliver all housing management services. It is clear both from the public meetings and the consultation results that tenants value locally delivered services and that this must be protected in moving to a new delivery model.

2. Staff

Some 18% of ALMO staff responded to the questionnaire.

- 51% strongly agree / agree that the best way to make savings and deliver better and more consistent housing services is to move from three ALMOs to a single organisation.
- 82% strongly agree / agree that within a single organisation services should be delivered through locally based teams.
- 56% would prefer all housing services to be provided by a single ALMO with the remaining 44% preferring the Council or having no preference.
- 58% identified aspects of duplication or overlap of provision between ALMOs and the Council.
- 64% presented ideas for improved services.

Results indicated a strong customer service culture with a very strong preference to retain delivery through locally based teams.

¹ Participant numbers in brackets

3. Elected members

- 3.1 Consensus to bring in-house and to retain locality based integrated services.
- 3.2 Deployment of resources should be customer-led and needs driven. The nature and quality of services should be codified, and standardised across the city.
- 3.3 Service delivery staff should be clear about their roles and responsibilities and fully empowered to act.
- 3.4 Greater recognition and sharing of best practice – joined up working across the city.

4. Area Panels

- 4.1 A mixed view from the Area Panel with some members stating that they voted for the Council option however but most appearing to support the ALMO option.
- 4.2 Consensus to retain and improve neighbourhood based integrated services (housing plus)
- 4.3 A view that most tenants were not greatly concerned about which model provided it at least sustains current level of support and activity generated through and by the Area Panel.
- 4.4 Needs to be something put in place that enables good practice to be shared across the city with scope to recommend and make changes.
- 4.5 Retain and strengthen integrated services known and delivered locally by trusted locals.
- 4.6 Retain community investment funding.
- 4.7 Enhance the tenant scrutiny role.
- 4.8 Improve tenant involvement.
- 4.9 Recurrent training, including sharing of best practice, for panel members.
- 4.10 Concern at the possible impact on locality-based front-line services, in particular with the anticipated major impact of imminent welfare reform.

5. Leeds City Council Service Providers

The primary concerns came from the cost and inefficiency of having to negotiate and administer three separate arrangements with the current ALMOs which would be alleviated by moving to a single management structure. A move to Council management was regarded by most as the favoured business option offering maximum efficiency and consistency of policy and practices.

6. Trades Union

A unanimous view to bring ALMO functions, including the ABCL, back in to LCC Housing Services alongside related and complementary services. Perceived advantages include:

- 6.1 Removes duplication of functions (and costs) (eg HR, finance, procurement)
- 6.2 Does away with the differing models of ALMO independence and enables clear and consistent systems of accountability and governance to be established.
- 6.3 Enables proper and consistent management of processes (HR and other) across the Council's domain (including housing services).

- 6.4 Exposes the function to Scrutiny.
- 6.5 Harmonises the application of Council staffing policy/strategy.
- 6.6 More likely to enable consistent pan-city service levels.

Strengths to be maintained include:

- 6.7 Tenant involvement, especially as currently through the Area Panels.
- 6.8 The nature and breadth of community support currently provided via Area Panels.

Concerns regarding

- 6.9 Job losses that would (probably) accompany any reorganisation, excepting senior/top management where there was already a perception that the number/cost of three ALMOs is excessive.
- 6.10 TUPE - ALMOs recruiting new staff and using agency workers when LCC is losing staff.
- 6.11 Absorption in to the Council housing services might weaken the links with non-housing services that form such an important part of the work of Area Panels.