

**Report of** Director Environment and Housing  
**Report to** General Purposes Committee  
**Date:** 11 December 2013  
**Subject:** Establishing a Housing Advisory Board

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

To determine the governance structure and functions for a Housing Advisory Board as part of the integration of housing services into the Council.

### Recommendations

1. General Purposes Committee is asked to:
  - 1.1 Consider the recommendations of the Executive Board in relation to governance arrangements for a Housing Advisory Board.
  - 1.2 Make the following recommendations to full Council:
    - To appoint a Housing Advisory Board to discharge the functions set out in the terms of reference in appendix 1 of this report.
    - To appoint six Elected Members to the Housing Advisory Board.
    - To co-opt the following as voting members of the Housing Advisory Board, for the terms of office set out in paragraph 3 of this report:
      - Three tenants/leaseholders
      - Three people who are independent of the Council.
    - To agree that the Housing Advisory Board may select up to three non-voting co-optees, with some specialist skill or knowledge which would be of assistance to the Housing Advisory Board, to be appointed for a term of office which relates to a particular issue.
    - To approve the quorum for the Board to be 4, including two Councillors and 1 tenant/leaseholder voting co-opted member.

## **1. Purpose of this report**

To ask the General Purposes Committee to consider and make recommendations to full Council about the appointment of a Housing Advisory Board.

## **2. Background information**

2.1 The meeting of Executive Board 19 June 2013 Executive Board resolved to integrate housing management within the Council's Environment and Housing directorate.

2.2 The meeting of Executive Board on 17 July 2013 considered a report from Director Environment and Housing setting out implementation arrangements and outlining the proposed governance structures to be put in place, which included a Housing Advisory Board.

## **3 Main issues**

### **3.1 Housing Advisory Board**

3.1.1 It is proposed that a Housing Advisory Board is appointed by the Council as an advisory committee under Section 102(4) Local Government Act 1972.

3.1.2 The role of the proposed Board would be to consider and make recommendations to the Executive about major decisions and policies regarding the housing management service. All major decisions and policies regarding the new housing management service will be directed through the Board who will in turn make recommendations to the Executive for agreement. The Director of Environment and Housing will also seek direction from the Board on major decisions affecting the service.

3.1.3 The Board will appoint sub groups/working groups as required to assist in carrying out its role.

3.1.4 Principles which will inform the work of the Board will include:

- The best quality housing service should be delivered to all Council tenants;
- the service should be built around the needs of tenants, with a more locally focused approach to delivery where possible
- There should be clear accountability in decision making;
- Services will provide value for money;
- Services will be informed by, and be responsive to, local need;
- There will be consistency in policy direction;
- There will be no or minimal duplication of front line services; and
- Services will draw on the best expertise available.
- A commitment to driving real action and change to improve services in communities;
- Openness and transparency in the way in which the Board carries out its work;

- Inclusiveness in the way that it engages with tenants, other service users and the public.

3.1.5 The terms of reference for the Advisory Board are set out in appendix 1 to this report.

## **3.2 Membership**

3.2.1 It is proposed that full Council appoint six Elected Members to the Board. (Political proportionality provisions apply, so at present this would be 4 Labour, 1 Conservative and 1 Liberal Democrat).

3.2.2 It is also proposed that full Council appoint the following as co-opted voting members of the Board:

- Three tenants/leaseholders
- Three people who are independent of the Council and who can bring particular experience to the Board.

3.2.3 To promote continuity, it is proposed that co-optees within each category are initially appointed on 1, 2 and 3 year terms of office respectively, and thereafter for a three year term. Voting co-optees will have to comply with the Members' Code of Conduct.

3.2.4 It is also proposed that the Housing Advisory Board may select up to three additional non-voting co-optees, with some specialist skill or knowledge which would be of assistance to the Housing Advisory Board, to be appointed to the Board on an ad hoc basis, for a term of office which relates to a particular issue.

3.2.5 The Chair of the Board will be appointed by full Council.

3.2.6 Quorum - It is proposed that Council Procedure Rule 28.4 is amended to provide that the quorum for meetings of the Board will be four members, including two Councillors and one tenant/leaseholder member.

3.2.7 Substitutes - No substitute arrangements are proposed for Board members.

3.2.8 The shadow board, including current tenant representatives, were consulted fully in developing the best approach for nominating both independent and tenant members to be appointed as members of the Board. Tenant members will be drawn from representative groups including strengthened area panels and the Leeds Tenants Federation. This will ensure that they have the appropriate support mechanism in place to enable them to best represent the views of tenants, and ensure areas of concern can be escalated from local tenant groups through to the Housing Advisory Board for discussion.

3.2.9 The voice of tenants in the new service will also be improved through a more robust tenant scrutiny process, which will be strengthened by being more closely linked with the council's Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny Board. The Tenant Scrutiny Board will provide independent, customer focused scrutiny which will robustly challenge policy practice and performance to ensure that Leeds City Council provides a high quality housing service that retains tenants at the heart of the organisation.

## **4 Corporate Considerations**

### **4.1 Consultation and Engagement**

The Executive Board, at its meeting 17 July 2013 considered governance arrangements for the Board, as detailed in this report. Other consultation was previously carried out with a number of citywide strategic partners (including the shadow Housing Advisory Board, which includes relevant Executive Members and tenant representatives). Engagement was also undertaken with the shadow housing advisory board, consisting of elected members, independents and tenant representatives which helped shape the role of the board and agree the process for nominating members.

### **4.2 Equality and Diversity/Cohesion and Integration**

- As a local authority committee, the Housing Advisory Board will have to meet public sector equality duties,
- Council policies and City Priorities.
- The Board will help drive delivery of our best council and City Priority Plan objectives. It will have a role to play in developing an enterprising council and will link closely to existing partnership bodies.

### **4.3 Resources and value for money**

The proposed governance structure is based on the right arrangements to deliver high quality, efficient services that offer value for money to Leeds' taxpayers and tenants as approved by Executive Board meeting on 19 June 2013.

### **4.4 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In**

#### **4.4.1**

The recommendation being put forward takes full account of the updated guidance for Councils considering the future of their ALMO housing management services published by the Communities and Local Government Department (CLG) in December 2011.

#### **4.4.2**

The usual access to information provisions and procedural provisions will apply to the Board, as a formal council advisory committee. Meeting decisions will be made by simple majority, with the chair having a casting vote in the event of an equality of voting.

#### **4.4.3**

This report does not contain any exempt or confidential information. It is not exempt from call-in.

### **4.5 Risk Management**

#### **4.5.1**

The Board will develop its own risk register.

## **5 Conclusions**

A Housing Advisory Board will provide strong leadership and support to housing management policy and practice.

## **6 Recommendations**

General Purposes Committee is asked to:

- 6.1 Consider the recommendations of the Executive Board in relation to governance arrangements for a Housing Advisory Board.
- 6.2 Make the following recommendations to full Council:
  - 6.2.1 To appoint a Housing Advisory Board to discharge functions as set out in the terms of reference in appendix 1 of this report.
  - 6.2.2 To appoint six Elected Members to the Housing Advisory Board.
  - 6.2.3 To co-opt the following as voting members of the Housing Advisory Board for the terms of office set out in paragraph 3 of this report:
    - Three tenants/leaseholders
    - Three people who are independent of the Council.
- 6.3 To agree that the Housing Advisory Board may select up to three non-voting co-optees, with some specialist skill or knowledge which would be of assistance to the Housing Advisory Board, to be appointed for a term of office which relates to a particular issue.

## **7 Background documents<sup>1</sup>**

- 7.1 None

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<sup>1</sup> 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.

## ADVISORY COMMITTEE

### Housing Advisory Board<sup>2</sup>

In relation to the authority's role as housing authority<sup>3</sup>, the Housing Advisory Board is authorised:

1. To consider and respond to the Executive in respect of proposals or consultations relating to:
  - The Housing Investment Plan and the Housing Service Plan;
  - The Key Lettings policy; and
  - Major projects under the capital programme.
2. To advise the Executive on the strategic direction of housing management.
3. To carry out such policy development tasks as may be requested by the Executive or the Council;
4. To review performance and make recommendations to the Executive as appropriate;
5. To consider and advise on any other issue referred to the Housing Advisory Board by the Executive.

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<sup>2</sup> Appointed by the Council as an advisory committee under Section 102(4) Local Government Act 1972

<sup>3</sup> Excluding those functions which the authority has agreed, with the approval of the Secretary of State, that another person should exercise as agent of the authority.