

Resident Participation Commission Final Report

enable /ɪˈneɪ.bəl/

verb [T] to make someone able to do something, or to make something possible

enabler /ɪˈneɪ.bləʳ/

noun [C] a person or organization that allows other people to do things themselves instead of doing things for them

December 2008

Commission Members:

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Resident Participation foreword

I have great pleasure in presenting this commission report, following our review of the resident participation among Lambeth tenants, leaseholders and freeholders and our investigation into methods of increasing participation in particular within under represented groups.

As councillors, we began this commission with a great deal of understanding of some of the issues surrounding encouraging wider participation, and during the commission we met with many of the key people who continually work hard to build and maintain many of the successful and important resident associations throughout the borough.

We cannot emphasise more the importance of the contributions of many of the residents in these associations who work tirelessly in supporting their communities. We hope that this commission goes a long way to supporting and building on their work in the future.

A key point that was raised over and over again during this commission is the importance of social events, community building and the important role of enablers encouraging and helping others to become more involved. We saw that where an association was based around social and enjoyable events the level of participation was higher with far greater rewards for all involved.

In looking at hard to reach groups, it was clear that expecting them to participate within current structures would not always be successful and that there is a need for an increasingly imaginative approach to engage these groups.

Among young people, we found that they did not relate to or feel that their voice would be heard at the current meetings and options such as youth panels, which may not share the same demographical areas of current participation structures, will be needed to be looked at to ensure that they feel their voice will be heard. We found that this was clearly also a major issue among groups where English was not their first language and groups with special needs.

Visiting Haringey gave an interesting insight into how levels of participation can be increased by removing a tiered structure of resident engagement with a greater focus on engagement based on issues that individuals are interested in.

A major highlight of the commission was the passion and hard work that many groups and individuals contribute to their communities. It was felt the term 'Chair' retained a focus on the committee element of the position and did not adequately reflect the important role that they play in the community.

Additionally when we met with officers from resident participation we were impressed by their passion and commitment towards building and extending resident engagement.

Throughout the commission we have found that there were common themes within the different groups, which we met, which helped give us some very clear directions towards our conclusions. I strongly recommend that Cabinet adopts all of our recommendations in order to ensure that in the many areas where resident participation in Lambeth is working well this is built on and that new methods engaged to widen its reach.

Before turning to our recommendations, I would like to thank my fellow councillors, Cllr Irene Kimm and Cllr Pete Bowyer for their assistance on this commission. I would also like to thank Byron Green, Lead Scrutiny Officer for his hard work throughout the commission and in preparing this report.

Cllr Christopher Wellbelove
Commission chair

Recommendations

"Resident participation is a two way process involving both residents and their landlords in the sharing of ideas, enabling residents to influence decisions regarding the management of their homes."¹

Introductory points

Recommendation 1:

The commission recognises that the advent of Lambeth Living means that much of the responsibility for improving resident participation now lies with that body. We commend this report to the Board and look forward to Lambeth Living working with Lambeth council officers to ensure this report's recommendations are actioned.

Recommendation 2:

The Commission does not wish to pre-empt the work of the Resident Involvement Group and supports it in its goal to review the structure and advise on the key change elements required for adjusting the customer engagement service for delivery via the Lambeth Living ALMO.

Breaking down the barriers and capacity building

Recommendation 3:

Residents must be given access to suitable training and skills development programmes, which are suitable to the diverse needs of the residents who want to access them, that will give resident associations the capacity to function independently from direct support of Resident Participation Services.

Recommendation 4:

To develop a strategy to actively promote link-organisations such as the Lambeth Voluntary Action Council (LVAC) with residents' associations as a resource for training, support and solutions to the challenges they face.

Changing the formal structures

Recommendation 5:

Rule changes need to be made and criteria established to allow social events to be counted as formal meetings for the purpose of the continuing recognition of resident associations.

¹ Wales and West Housing Association (2006), "*Steps to resident participation*" attributed to the Tenant Participatory Advisory Service (TPAS)

Recommendation 6:

Annual General Meetings should be attached to a large-scale social community event. Resources and support should be provided to assist associations in developing this proposal.

Recommendation 7:

Develop links with all types of existing community groups to increase opportunities for resident participation in innovative ways.

Recommendation 8:

Procedures need to be developed to deal with resident associations that are not inclusive or not carrying out their required functions, to ensure the maximum representation of residents by their local association.

Recommendation 9:

Re-examine the nomination and voting processes for resident association officer holders to encourage greater access and openness and amend the model constitution for resident associations accordingly.

Recommendation 10:

Participants in resident associations should be referred to as community leaders to reflect their status rather than traditional committee titles.

Recommendation 11:

Rules should be changed to enable and encourage the scope of resident associations to represent wider communities in their areas and should be renamed

Recommendation 12:

Strategies need to be developed to encourage the adoption of small "orphaned" estates and street properties by larger local existing groups.

Facilities at the heart of the community

Recommendation 13:

That an analysis is carried out into the current usage of community facilities by association, who has access, and the potential for hiring out to generate income. The report should include associations or estates that have no access, and proposals for alternative venues that could be arranged for them e.g. partnering with nearby estates or schools.

Recommendation 14:

A report listing vacant council owned premises on or near estates that could be brought back into use by associations is also required, with details of their current internal “ownership”, and reasons why they are not currently in use. Strategies for bringing facilities back into use should also be suggested.

Recommendation 15:

Assistance should be given to resident associations to advertise their community facilities for hiring and to link them up with appropriate local businesses and organisations.

Improving communication

Recommendation 16:

That an investigation be carried out with a view to procuring low-cost broadband facilities and appropriate skills development for all resident associations and their community facilities.

Recommendation 17:

That assistance is given to resident groups to develop the skills or find the support necessary to access new forms of technology to engage more widely with their communities.

Empowering and encouraging hard to reach groups

Recommendation 18:

Groups or panels representing communities that may not be geographical could be given recognition on par with resident associations and links set up between them.

Informing new communities

Recommendation 19:

The Commission agrees there is an urgent need to provide support and guidance to officers so that appropriate translation information is used on websites, publications and other appropriate communications. It recommends that an appropriate strategy is developed to address this issue.

Moving towards an excellent service

Recommendation 20:

The Commission requests that a report is prepared and reported to the Housing Scrutiny Committee in the 2009/2010 cycle on how developments in resident involvement service delivery are moving Lambeth towards an excellent KLOE5 standard.

Section 1 - Introduction

Background to this review

- 1.1 The Resident Participation Commission was set up in response to member suggestions to examine the current state of resident associations representing Lambeth tenants, leaseholders and freeholders.
- 1.2 Members wanted to know what is needed for successful resident associations to perform effectively in their role, what tools enable them to perform it, and what more the council could do to enable them to perform their role.
- 1.3 They wanted to discover what the level of engagement with residents is on their estates and how to improve it.
- 1.4 They asked if more residents could be encouraged to become actively involved and, if so, how.
- 1.5 Just what are the barriers to greater resident participation, and how can we remove them?

The Lambeth context

- 1.6 This Commission's intentions sit squarely with the Lambeth Corporate Plan. Lambeth's vision and mission sets out the importance of engaging with our communities, stating that "we are committed to engaging with citizens" and "this commitment lies at the heart of [our] priorities..."².
- 1.7 The Commission's work also fits well with the Lambeth Together Strategic Action Plan 2008-11 that was adopted by Cabinet on 28th July 2008.

*"Reaching out to communities, listening to them and enabling them to be an integral part of how we tackle poverty and inequality is not simply a case of launching one new 'listening' initiative or releasing a series of consultation documents. Further, active and engaged communities do not just occur as a result of a few public meetings. Rather, work in this field requires the council to undertake a consistent and holistic programme of actions, which provides people with a series of opportunities to get involved."*³

- 1.8 In addition, the commitment to tackling inequality and social exclusion provides a lens with which to approach this investigation, with an important focus on the community. It states; "We are determined to ensure that the borough remains a place characterised by diversity and one in which there is not just tolerance, but a real sense of pride in our communities... For too many people, their ethnic origin, gender, sexual orientation, age, faith or disability results in disadvantage."⁴

² London Borough of Lambeth (2007), "Lambeth Corporate Plan 2007-2010: Delivering quality, tackling inequality"

³ Resident Participation Commission Evidence Notes (2008), Briefing: Lambeth Together Strategic Action Plan

⁴ As above

- 1.9 Improving resident participation, it can be argued, is also fundamental to the updated corporate plan's key priority: "Better housing is in place and great neighbourhoods exist."⁵
- 1.10 For some time, Lambeth has been consulting and planning to move the majority of its housing stock over to an arms length management organisation or ALMO.
- 1.11 Lambeth Living went live in June 2008. This has meant that much of the responsibility for the development of resident participation has now passed over to this new organisation.
- 1.12 This is the first time a commission report will have a direct impact on Lambeth Living and members were keen that its findings and recommendations be considered by the Lambeth Living Board.

Recommendation 1: The commission recognises that the advent of Lambeth Living means that much of the responsibility for improving resident participation now lies with that body. We commend this report to its Board and look forward to Lambeth Living working with Lambeth council officers to ensure this report's recommendations are actioned.

The national context

- 1.13 Community engagement and resident participation have been the subject of tremendous regulatory and legislative developments in recent years. Consequently, there is an enormous amount of research, government reports, commissions and white papers, which set the agenda for resident participation. All of this has provided a background to the commission's investigations.
- 1.14 Ranging from Office of the Deputy Prime Minister guidance on "Developing good practice in resident participation" based on research from 1999. Round six of the Beacon Council Scheme in 2004 included "Getting Closer to Communities", to the Elton Review⁶ and the Cave Review⁷. The list goes on and on.
- 1.15 Resident empowerment is increasingly seen as being the key to service improvements, accountability, and meeting local needs. Recent and forthcoming changes in housing policy mean that social housing providers will be expected to spend more time "looking outwards to the people who really matter".⁸
- 1.16 There are also extensive key lines of enquiry (KLOEs) used by the Audit Commission Housing Inspectorate when looking at resident involvement.⁹

⁵ London Borough of Lambeth (2007), "*Lambeth Corporate Plan 2008-2011: Delivering quality, tackling inequality*"

⁶ CLG (2006), "The Elton Review of Regulatory and Compliance Requirements for Registered Social Landlords"

⁷ Cave, Professor Martin (July 2007), "*Every Tenant Matters: a review of social housing regulation*"

⁸ Warrington, Richard and Abigail Davies (2007), "*Leading The Way: Achieving Resident-Driven Accountability And Excellence*", Chartered Institute of Housing

⁹ <http://www.audit-commission.gov.uk/housing/housingkloe/kloe5.asp?CategoryID=english^1628>

Meeting up with these standards is crucial for Lambeth's housing if it is to achieving a sufficiently high star rating to draw down additional significant government funding.

- 1.17 The very recent white paper "Communities in control: real people, real power" published in July by Communities and Local Government (CLG) has a strong resonance with what this commission set out to achieve. The Prime Minister, Gordon Brown, sets out in the foreword of the white paper sentiments which apply equally well to resident participation:

*"This is not about making people sit in meetings on wet Tuesday nights, it is about helping citizens to get involved when they want to on their own terms ... it is an agenda for empowerment that reaches right across the board, from supporting people who want to take an active role in their communities to giving them better access to information and the chance to get more involved."*¹⁰

Terms of reference

- 1.18 The commission is seeking to increase the levels and breadth of community involvement in housing issues.
- 1.19 The commission will be seeking to engage those actively involved in existing resident participation groups, those not covered by such organisations, or those who may prefer to be involved in different ways.
- 1.20 In order to do this it wishes to examine the effectiveness of existing forms of resident participation, such as tenant and resident associations (TRAs), in order to discover both the successes and the barriers to involvement in them.

Methodology

- 1.21 The Commission worked closely with officers from Housing, Regeneration and Environment Department to carry out this investigation. With their own resident involvement group doing a project around benchmarking with two similar London boroughs, the Commission expressed an intention not to overlap with their work. Conducting these enquiries at the same time with good communication between officers was actually quite beneficial.
- 1.22 Commission members attended the tenants' conference as a starting point to the investigation to gain an understanding of residents' concerns. They were also able to publicise its work to a very large number of interested people.
- 1.23 Evidence sessions were arranged to gain insight into a wide range of resident groups and experienced resident association activists.

¹⁰ CLG White Paper (July 2008), Communities in control: real people, real power

1.24 Equalities Impact Statement

- 1.25 From the beginning, in assessing equalities, the key risk identified was the difficulty there would be in engaging the many disparate hard-to-reach groups in the borough. In researching and consulting for this commission, it has been important to factor this in to take account of all residents of the borough at every stage.

Resident Participation Commission Timeline

Key Dates	Description
12 th October 2007	Preliminary Planning Discussion
29 th October 2007	Evidence session: Resident Involvement – Update from Housing Officers
17 th November 2007	Tenants' conference: Gathering initial anecdotal evidence from delegates
20 th November 2007	Resident Involvement Group Meeting: Benchmark group analysing the resident involvement service
11 th January 2008	Focus Groups: Staff involved in engaging and involving residents
20 February 2008	Site Visit: Haringey Homes
15 th May 2008	Final Planning Session
28 th May 2008	Evidence Session: Presentation and discussions with Tanzeem Ahmed, Director of Olmec. Discussion with the Chair of Leaseholders Council, seeking views on the future of resident participation
30 th May 2008	Site visit: Chaplin Close sheltered housing community in North Lambeth
6 th June 2008	Site visit: Palace Road Community Centre, which included discussions with local resident association members, and Palace Road Project users and supporters
10 th June 2008	Evidence Session: Hard-to-reach groups
June/July 2008	Young people's video evidence A diverse group of local young people submitted their evidence on resident participation in a 15 minute DVD produced by the Youth Council
8 August 2008	Commission meeting: Commission first discussion on final recommendations
4 November 2008	Commission: Approval of final report.
4 December 2008	Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee Final report to Housing Scrutiny Committee
23 March 2009	Action plan approved by Cabinet

Acknowledgments

Commission Members:

Councillor Christopher Wellbelove
Councillor Irene Kimm
Councillor Peter Bowyer

Witnesses:

Tanzeem Ahmed, Director of Olmec
Amina Abdulkadir, Chair of Salama Community
Rasmi Agrawal, Tulse Hill Resident Association (former chair)
Mary Roberts, Lambeth Mental Health & Disabled Peoples Action Group.
Asuman Ozkan, Chair of Lambeth Living Board
David Hart, former Chair of Tenants' Council
Rita Fitzgerald, former Chair of Tenants' Council
Christina Vaughan, Chair of Leaseholder Council

Thanks to Lambeth young people through the Youth Council who produced an excellent video evidence resource:

Fisnik Tahiri, Project Leader

Kerri Smith

Peter Bannor

Jonathan Borland

Shaun Bedassie

Marlon Fraser

Tania Balola

Darryl Farnell

Princess Bernard

Lisa Riley

Rashidat Lawar.

Our site visit hosts:

Tenants' conference, and the many residents, association chairs and board members who ventured their opinions and experiences, which helped the commission get underway.

Homes for Haringey, in particular Simon Godfrey their Involvement, Communications & Equalities Manager, and Haringey residents for hosting us

Chaplin Close residents: Hazel Agar, Irene Hinton, Nan Rogers, Frank Grant, Barbara Blaxland, Ann Parnell McGarry, Toni White and Doris

Palace Road TRA and Community Centre: Glen Neil, Paul Sinclair, Lucia Jean, Jack Elliot and the many other people of the area who dropped into the Palace whilst the commission was visiting.

Officers:

Marcia Mitchell, Assistant Director Housing Management

Gerard Caulker, Community Involvement Manager

Anne Phillips, Consultation Coordinator

Tom Tyson, Policy Manager – Strategy and Performance

Liam Kelly, Community Involvement Team Leader (North)

Joanne Hall, Community Involvement Team Leader (South)

Cristina Posner, Community Involvement Team Leader (Central)

Frank Tamplin, Resident Participation Officer (North)

Sarah Vincent, Resident Participation Officer (South)

Byron R. Green, Lead Scrutiny Officer

Section 2 - Commission Findings

- 2.1 In carrying out its enquiries with the different residents and resident groups, the current staff engaged in resident participation, and organisations with direct experience with supporting and developing resident participation, the Commission heard some very similar themes from these very different perspectives.
- 2.2 The Commission also discovered that there is a wealth of knowledge, learning and guidance available in the field of resident participation from current academic research to Audit Commission Key Lines of Enquiry (KLOEs) and best practice examples, Beacon Council themes, and recent Government Commissions of enquiry.
- 2.3 It is hardly surprising that the messages that can be found in all this background matches up closely to what the Commission heard from its witnesses. As members of staff put it “If you look at Councils which have Beacon Status you realise that effective resident participation is not rocket science.”
- 2.4 It appeared to Members that both the knowledge necessary and desire for increasing and improving resident participation is out there waiting to be applied.
- 2.5 Members also engaged with the Resident Involvement Review Group and were told of its goals to help build a fit for purpose resident participation service.

2.6 It aims to do this by benchmarking effective services by looking closely at successful “neighbour” arms length managements organisations (ALMOs) in London.

2.7 In carrying out its work it is hoped that the Resident Involvement Group can meet its terms of reference objectives:

Resident Involvement Group membership:

- Lambeth Tenants’ Council Executive*
- Lambeth Leasehold Council (Chair & Vice Chair)*
- Lambeth Living ALMO (Shadow Board Chair)*
- Lambeth Scrutiny Commission (Resident involvement)*
- Hounslow Homes ALMO*
- Homes for Haringey ALMO*
- Lambeth Community Involvement Unit*
- Lambeth Strategy and Partnerships Unit*
- Lambeth Housing Management Assistant Director*
- Lambeth Housing Management Area Strategic Manager*
- Lambeth Active Communities Unit*

- To review the existing community involvement structure.
- To provide an effective re-alignment of the Council’s client function and the *Lambeth Living*, ALMO’s operational objectives to effectively engage with its customers.
- To produce a detailed delivery plan for meeting a minimum two star level on the Audit Commission KLOE5 objectives

Recommendation 2: The Commission does not wish to pre-empt the work of the Resident Involvement Group and supports it in its goal to review the structure and advise on the key change elements required for adjusting the customer engagement service for delivery via the Lambeth Living ALMO.

Breaking down the barriers: enabling and capacity building.

enable /ɪˈneɪ.bəl/

verb [T] to make someone able to do something, or to make something possible

enabler /ɪˈneɪ.bləʳ/

noun [C]

a person or organization that allows other people to do things themselves instead of doing things for them

(from [Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary](#))

- 2.8 These definitions which are highlighted on the title page to this report capture the essence of what is needed to build successful and effective resident participation.
- 2.9 These words came most powerfully from residents at the Commission's first engagement at Tenants conference and again at the site visit with the Chaplin Close Residents' Association.
- 2.10 The Commission were very impressed by the residents turning out in such large numbers to meet them and congratulated them on having such enthusiastic involvement.
- 2.11 The residents pointed out that it hadn't always been like this. They told the Commission that you have to work to empower residents to get them to do things. One person could be in charge trying to do everything but it works much better if jobs are shared out and a larger number take responsibility.
- 2.12 They also told the commission it is a good idea to approach newcomers: "The minute a new person arrives in the community you try to get them involved. You have to plan for succession, for passing responsibility on to others."

For those people who have the skills and energy, it is sometimes better for them not to take over and become a one man band as the chair. A much better idea is for them to act as an "enabler". An "enabler" is someone who gives help and support to the other committee members so they can become more independent.

- Chaplin Close Resident

- 2.13 The Chaplin Close residents did not see Resident Participation Officers as the solution to some of the problems they faced, but felt they could do with some assistance around accessing training for themselves and the volunteers that support them.
- 2.14 Residents felt that one thing that would help would be some basic secretarial and administrative support and suggested that perhaps the solution would be to have someone shared between several organisations like their own. Difficulties in accessing fundraising are also an issue.
- 2.15 The assistance they need is in finding links with the right people and organisations to make this happen.
- 2.16 The Chair of Leaseholders Council also acknowledged that, “we need to get younger people up to take over responsibility.”
- 2.17 For communities to feel empowered they need leaders they trust who understand them and reflect their makeup. But in many places people from certain communities feel they lack pathways into power. That is why it is important to help young people from diverse backgrounds to become effective leaders whether in the public, private or the third sector.¹¹
- 2.18 Lambeth young people themselves have emphasised that involvement in their local communities “would probably grow with young people approaching young people. Then it would evolve and more people would want to be involved.” They pointed to the peer projects that the Youth Council currently do that effectively involve many young people around the borough developing their skills and building their capacity to involve others.”
- 2.19 Palace Road residents believe that they need to look at making answers for themselves. “Central resources are important which support, train and give skills to people in the community otherwise people drop off and you lose continuity.”
- 2.20 They have also linked up with outside support in the shape of Morrisons, one of the large contractor partners. The company is working with the residents to help develop the community centre, to install internet resources, and to provide apprenticeships for residents in the local community.
- 2.21 The Commission also held discussions with the Director of Olmec as an expert in black and ethnic minority (BAME) resident participation. Olmec was established in 2003 as a community investment foundation by Presentation, a social investment agency that also provides affordable housing and does community regeneration projects.

¹¹ CLG White Paper (July 2008)

- 2.22 Olmec works with community organisations and individuals in disadvantaged neighbourhoods to design and deliver innovative projects that act as catalysts for change. They empower communities through a community led approach.
- 2.23 A key point of learning to be drawn from the discussion was that what works for BAME communities works for other groups too.
- 2.24 The discussion focussed on two areas of work carried out by Olmec very relevant to Lambeth. The first was learning from the “Getting Engaged” project¹², which was set up in May 2001. It was launched to find new ways of involving black and ethnic minority (BAME) communities in regeneration and was based in Vassall Ward.
- 2.25 Subsequent to this was the “Black on Board” project¹³, which offers a programme of free training, mentoring and support to assist people from minority ethnic communities to achieve places on the boards of housing associations. The scheme helps participants to gain the knowledge and abilities required to be a part of voluntary management boards¹⁴.
- 2.26 This programme was implemented successfully with impressive results in housing associations throughout Southwark.
- 2.27 The Olmec experience underlined what the members heard elsewhere that it was important for support projects not to build dependence amongst resident organisations. Learning from the project included:
- Never go into an area and create dependency.
 - Facilitate and empower communities in the event that [we] are not needed [or available] anymore.
- 2.28 The Director of Olmec stressed the importance of making it about the skills of individuals and building capacity within the community. For example, successes with younger people involved getting into schools and training up young researchers.
- 2.29 The excerpt below demonstrates how the Audit Commission’s Key Lines of Enquiry also make the provision of training an essential part of an excellent resident involvement organisation:¹⁵

¹² Centre for Local Economic Strategies (April 2004) , “*The Getting Engaged Project Evaluation*”, for Presentation

¹³ Olmec (March 2005), “*Black on Board - Executive Summary*”

¹⁴ Jersingham, Mercy (February 2005), “*Black on Board - Increasing the Diversity of Housing Association Boards in Southwark: A good practice guide on recruiting and supporting BME communities on to the boards of housing associations*”, on behalf of Olmec

¹⁵ Audit Commission (July 2007), *Housing Inspectorate Key Lines of Enquiry, Landlord Services: Resident involvement*, <http://www.audit-commission.gov.uk/>

<p>Resources for resident involvement</p> <p>How does the level of resources and training for service users demonstrate the organisation's commitment to resident involvement?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has the funding and staff in place to make effective resident involvement happen either through dedicated staff resources or through mainstreamed resident involvement service delivery. • Delivers high-quality, and ongoing, training to facilitate resident involvement in technical matters. • Provides significant resources for resident training, which is developed with service users. • Has set up training for potential service user board members to widen the scope of possible applicants. • Makes training and support such as mentoring an integral element of being a resident board member (in ALMOs/ housing associations).
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2.30 Members are convinced that in order to build the independence of organisations resident need to be enabled to build capacity, and to plan for the future.

Recommendation 3: Residents must be given access to suitable training and skills development programmes, which are suitable to the diverse needs of the residents who want to access them, that will give resident associations the capacity to function independently from direct support of Resident Participation Services.

2.31 Members agreed that the evidence shows resident groups need support from very many different sources outside of the council and Lambeth Living staff in order to survive.

Recommendation 4: To develop a strategy to promote actively link-organisations such as the Lambeth Voluntary Action Council (LVAC) with residents' associations as a resource for training, support and solutions to the challenges they face.

Changing the formal structures

2.32 There were a number of issues around the impact of the formal structure of meetings.

2.33 Members heard strong evidence across the board for the success of adapting resident participation on the back of less formal and social events.

2.34 Young people and those with experience of leading resident associations agreed that some people might feel a bit alienated by the traditional meeting model, and that there may be others like them not attending. Others expressed a fear that they would be looked down on and be told, "You don't know what you are talking about." The effect of this is that many "stay out rather than be ridiculed."

- 2.35 Young people felt that the best places to engage and consult them would be the places they liked to get together such as their local youth clubs, dance classes, local parks, sport centres, adventure playgrounds. They said, “There are still a few around. That would be a really good opportunity for TRAs to come along and see young people” and, “You could also engage them at local, parks, sport centres, adventure playgrounds, dance classes, there are a lot of places you could go.”
- 2.36 A Mursell Estate resident acknowledged, “It doesn’t help that older people do not seem to get on with younger people.” However, it was interesting to note that both younger and older residents often agreed about the best ways to engage them [see box].
- 2.37 All tenants can be ‘hard to reach’. Most people do not want to be involved in high-level governance but do want the opportunity to express their views and influence decisions. Employ a mix of formal and informal methods. Community events, local media and walkabouts can increase ‘reach’.¹⁶
- 2.38 At Chaplin Close, members met an extremely successful resident association operating in a small sheltered housing community.
- 2.39 They told the Commission that resident’s associations have to be so much more than having meetings – you have to be creative about how to get people involved – “bribery and corruption” as one resident put it, for example “apple pie”, tea and cakes and the like on an afternoon before a committee meeting.
- 2.40 The Commission felt there needs to be changes to what can be permitted as recognition of a “formal” resident association events rather than just formal meetings as valid evidence of ongoing resident association activity as currently required by their constitutions. This should also include ways to include the Annual General Meeting on the back of a major annual social event.
- 2.41 This rethink to traditional meeting forms is also supported by organisations such as the national Tenant Participation Advisory Service, which advocates a wide range of models to engage people. As Richard Hewgill, Chair of TPAS said, “These days it is not sensible to expect people to meet up in drafty halls, especially when their favourite soap is on.”¹⁷

What is the best way to get ... people together to ask them about their ideas?

“I think maybe to have an event, like a dedicated day or something or a couple of hours. Maybe some music, some food, some activities or a performer. Things like that so young people are free to talk about the issue that are affecting them and their communities and also making it entertaining as well so people won’t be bored.”

- Lambeth Young Person

“Estates should use things such as a show or play to encourage more people to come together.”

- Westbury Estate Adult

¹⁶ Centre for Urban and Regional Studies, University of Birmingham (June 2004), *Empowering communities, improving housing: Involving black and minority ethnic tenants and communities*, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister: London

¹⁷ Richard Hewgill, Presentation to CfPS Conference (2005), Housing & Regeneration Workshop

Recommendation 5: Rule changes need to be made and criteria established to allow social events to be counted as formal meetings for the purpose of the continuing recognition of resident associations.

Recommendation 6: Annual General Meetings should be attached to a large-scale social community event. Resources and support should be provided to assist associations in developing this proposal.

- 2.42 Guidance from the Audit Commission states that “the most effective way of ensuring that a cross section of residents is reached is for landlords to offer a menu of opportunities for residents to become involved.”¹⁸
- 2.43 Research by the Scottish Executive found that, in recognition that many tenants and service users do not wish to, and are not able to, get involved in formal groups - a number of landlords had set up alternative structures to increase opportunities for participation¹⁹

***Supporting a variety of tenants’ organisations
Queens Cross Housing Association***

The Community Services department at Queens Cross Housing Association has been established to manage the Association’s supported housing projects but also to co-ordinate the support given to a large number of community groups. Many of the groups’ activities have nothing to do with housing but the Association takes full advantage of these links with its residents to encourage participation.

Supporting community groups like fishing, and sewing clubs, for example, encourages community activity and participation, and builds capacity for participation and influence on Queens Cross’s activities, which can be developed further when appropriate.

The department also uses general community activities such as the annual gala day and festive activities, to promote the work of the Association and generate community awareness and support.

- 2.44 The Commission highlighted the Darby and Joan Club’s successes here in Lambeth in getting people together using social and other activities as a focus. It was also felt that they show how to break down the barriers of the wider community.
- 2.45 The original Darby and Joan Club was founded in 1942 and is now the last remaining independently run older people’s day centre in the London Borough of Lambeth. Streatham Darby and Joan Club provides a wide range of activities and services for ever more diverse groups of older people, in

¹⁸ Audit Commission (2004), *Housing - Improving services through resident involvement: Management handbook*

¹⁹ Regulation and Inspection Division of Communities Scotland (2005), *Key themes from inspections: Tenant Participation*, Scottish Executive

conjunction with its partners: Lambeth Asian Centre, Make A Difference Black Afro-Caribbean Group, Age Concern Lambeth, and Lambeth Council.

- 2.46 Existing organisations such as the Darby and Joan Club provide excellent opportunities to develop innovative approaches for involving different groups in resident participation, even if it is just an opportunity for publicity or providing information.

Recommendation 7: Develop links with all types of existing community groups to increase opportunities for resident participation in innovative ways.

- 2.47 A review of the New Deal for Communities (NDC) Partnerships advocates questioning whether existing structures are representative and working to widen participation. This might involve a review of the exclusionary and discriminatory consequences of current resident engagement activities (nature of meetings, location, venue, time etc.).²⁰
- 2.48 Members heard that there was anecdotal evidence that these kinds of problems and others may have occurred in Lambeth resident associations in the past, which prevented them operating effectively or representatively, and were something to avoid in the future.
- 2.49 Community involvement officers expressed a concern that there are currently no relevant guidelines or processes in place and suggested that they are needed to help address resident associations, which had fallen into such difficulties.

Recommendation 8: Procedures need to be developed to deal with resident associations that are not inclusive or not carrying out their required functions to ensure the maximum representation of residents by their local association.

- 2.50 Members felt that it was important to ensure that democratic processes and practices established under the constitutions of resident association are examined. They were concerned that arrangements could exist which discourage residents from seeking election, particularly against sitting office holders.
- 2.51 A clear set of criteria that set out acceptable democratic processes need to be determined.

Recommendation 9: Re-examine the nomination and voting processes for resident association officer holders to encourage greater access and openness and amend the model constitution for resident associations accordingly.

- 2.52 In discussion with the Resident Involvement Group, it was suggested that one of the barriers to resident involvement was the use of formal titles such as Chair.

²⁰ Green, Stephen and Robinson, David (2004), New Deal for Communities: The National Evaluation Research Report 43: Housing and Community Cohesion: The Contribution of NDC Pathfinders, Centre for Regional Economic and Social Research Sheffield Hallam University

- 2.53 A solution to this could be to re-brand the leadership roles in resident association so that they are not seen as job descriptions but rather about values.
- 2.54 Moving away from titles such as chair or executive and encouraging the use of something like “community leaders” also enhances the role and emphasises the position of association at the centre of our local communities.

Recommendation 10: Participants in resident associations should be referred to as community leaders to reflect their status rather than traditional committee titles.

- 2.55 Similarly, the status of the associations could be enhanced by linking them to and making them more relevant to the entire local community.

Recommendation 11: Rules should be changed to enable and encourage the scope of resident associations to represent wider communities in their areas and should be renamed community associations

- 2.56 It was noted by community involvement officers that some residents such as those in street properties and orphaned estates were unable to form associations for a number of reasons, including their small number of households.
- 2.57 During the site visit to the Palace Road Estate, the commission heard of the work that the residents association had done to include local residents in street properties around the estate into the activities of the association and the community centre.

Recommendation 12: Strategies need to be developed to encourage the adoption of small "orphaned" estates and street properties by larger local existing groups.

Facilities at the heart of the community

“There are clear benefits to local groups owning or managing community assets – such as village halls, community centres, building preservation trusts and community enterprises. Community ownership can bring people from different backgrounds together. It can foster a sense of belonging. It can play a role in enhancing the local environment, alleviating poverty and raising people’s aspirations.”²¹

Rt Hon Ruth Kelly MP

Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

- 2.58 The commission heard about the importance and benefits that a functioning community centre or facility can bring. They were also disturbed to hear from some residents about vacant sites falling into ruin whilst the associations were crying out for space.
- 2.59 Young people also expressed concern about the lack of facilities that they have access to gather in and participate in activities. The very spaces where they also talk about the issues that matter to them and where they feel it is best for them to be consulted.
- 2.60 Resident participation officers also identified problems with this issue: “It is difficult to find place for everyone to meet. It is also difficult to access funds to develop disused buildings into community assets.”

Making Assets Work: The Quirk Review of community management and ownership of public assets (March 2007).²²

The Quirk Review is part of the Government’s programme for empowering communities set out in the Local Government White Paper published in late 2006. The terms of reference of the review were to find ways to overcome barriers to more community asset management and ownership, taking account of the need to manage risks.

The report concludes that there are no substantive barriers to prevent councils transferring assets into community management or full ownership. The main obstacles are a lack of awareness of the existing powers to act and the need for a change in culture that would enable every community having the opportunity to have a greater role in running services and owning assets.

Making Assets Work makes a number of recommendations designed to break down barriers and foster a new culture of citizen engagement and community participation.

The conclusion of the report is that transferring public assets to communities not only leads to more responsive services, but can also create “more confident empowered communities with greater civic spirit”.

- 2.61 The Commission visit to the Palace Project, a newly re-opened community centre that has been driven by the residents of the Palace Road Estate. The

²¹ Quirk, Barry (2007), *Making Assets Work: The Quirk Review of community management and ownership of public assets*

²² LGIU Briefing (May 2007), “*Quirk Review: Making Assets Work*”, [LGIU website](#)

project has been a triumph in the short time it has been operating and there are plans for much more.

- 2.62 Members expressed concern at what they were shown outside however.
- 2.63 Two adjacent buildings remain out of action. One used to be the Ashram centre, which has been derelict for 12 years. On the other side, a similar building remains empty a year after the funding for the digital media project there ended. Both contain valuable office space that could be used by the community; however, they are the responsibility of different council departments that do not seem to have a strategy to involve the local community in them. Whilst they are unoccupied, they attract vandals, encourage burglary and present a safety hazard to local people. Bringing them back into use successfully as community buildings, as the community centre has been, would alleviate these risks.
- 2.64 Members conceded that they had experience of similar derelict premises in many parts of the borough where local communities are crying out for such facilities.

Recommendation 13: That an analysis is carried out into the current usage of community facilities by association, who has access, and the potential for hiring out to generate income. The report should include associations or estates that have no access, and proposals for alternative venues that could be arranged for them e.g. partnering with nearby estates or schools.

Recommendation 14: A report listing vacant council owned premises on or near estates that could be brought back into use by associations is also required, with details of their current internal “ownership”, and reasons why they are not currently in use. Strategies for bringing facilities back into use should also be suggested.

- 2.65 Palace Road residents know that their venue is a valuable resource – but noted to the Commission that it would help if there was a central way of advertising contacts across the borough to organisations who may wish to hire it out.
- 2.66 At Chaplin Close, the Commission were impressed by the high production standards of the resident association’s regular newsletter and publicity leaflets. By partnering with a local Public Relations firm, professional services have been procured by providing free hall hire for the company and their clients.

Recommendation 15: Assistance should be given to resident associations to advertise their community facilities for hiring and to link them up with appropriate local businesses and organisations.

Improving communication

- 2.67 Members felt that assistance should be provided to ensure resident associations have access to low-cost broadband.
- 2.68 In the first instance, it was important to ensure that associations had access to direct online communication with housing officers. Members enquired if this could be as simple as an allowance towards home facilities.
- 2.69 There would also be a benefit in community facilities to enable direct access to Housing services. This would enable housing officers to be able to access their systems and begin processing queries when present. They could take at least some immediate action in response to concerns raised with them at resident association and other community events.

Recommendation 16: That an investigation be carried out with a view to procuring low-cost broadband facilities and development for all resident associations and their community facilities.

- 2.70 Young residents also expressed a desire to be engaged using new technology. They cited the traditional forms of publicity and information used by resident associations as uninspiring and not relevant or attractive to them.
- 2.71 Resident participation officers agreed with the observation stating: "You need to engage people on their terms, not just meetings – for example Youtube, text, and email."

"Email and internet, and all that, because that's what people are into now."

- Lambeth Young Person

Recommendation 17: That assistance be given to resident groups to develop the skills or find the support necessary to access new forms of technology to engage more widely with their communities.

Empowering and encouraging involvement from hard to reach groups

- 2.72 The commission recognised the potential for empowering and recognising groups in the wider community such as youth and new ethnic communities and bringing them into the resident participation process.
- 2.73 Community involvement officers praised the good work that resident associations do, but noted that they are sometimes resistant to encouraging lots of new people into existing groups.
- 2.74 The following case studies are drawn from examples of excellent practice in Resident involvement (KLOE5) collected during Audit Commission inspections of housing management organisations.²³

²³ Source: Audit Commission "Positive Practice" www.auditcommission.gov.uk/housing/

Encouraging tenant and leaseholder involvement from under represented groups

- Derby City Council and ALMO

There is a high level of awareness of the need to attract participation from under represented groups of tenants and leaseholders. The majority of those actively involved are older white people. The Council and the Derby Association of Community Partners (DACP) have carried out research into the reasons for under representation and their reluctance to get involved and are using the results of this research to influence future work. Positive steps have been taken to encourage participation through specialist groups involving children, young people and members of black and minority ethnic (BME) communities. These have resulted in additional tenants groups being set up which allow these under represented groups to set their own agendas and contribute within the broader tenant and leaseholder participation framework

It is positive that specific efforts have been made to engage young people. A youth conference was held in 2005 attracting 91 tenants or family members. Specific consultation exercises with youth groups have been held on issues such as developing play facilities. Derby Homes has also led a series of events in schools as part of a campaign to tackle anti-social behaviour.

Increasing the diversity of residents involved

- Eastland Homes Partnership (Housing Association)

Personal visits were made to black and minority ethnic (BME) residents resulting in a sustained increase in the number of BME residents involved. The residents forum has developed its own action plan for increasing diversity as a result of training. Diversity and age is monitored at all involvement events and used to determine involvement initiatives. Eastlands Homes employs a youth involvement officer who has established 'Dream' (reward) Schemes and a Youth Forum. The Chair of the Youth Forum has been co opted onto one of Eastlands' committees

**Resident involvement with difficult to engage groups
- Brent Housing Partnership (ALMO)**

Residents community groups are designed to bring together residents who are spread throughout the borough and feel isolated or vulnerable through age, infirmity or work demands. Social events are organised to get these residents together and they have then the opportunity to voice their concerns and views on the services they are receiving. Two focus groups have also been developed as informal gatherings allowing residents to get their views across without being constrained by the formal processes in TRA meetings. The groups met every two months to discuss, review and consult about new policies and procedures. In a bid to increase BME involvement in the tenant movement a Somalian tenants conference was held [in 2002]. Brent has the second highest Somalian population in London and has approximately 450 Somalian tenants. The conference was deemed a success by its attendees and a subsequent publication was produced setting out how and why the conference was organised and the outcomes of key discussion and learning points. Action has been taken to encourage existing Associations to recruit more BME members. A criteria requiring that Associations should strive to recruit a minimum of 5% from the BME community has been built into the revised Residents compact which, was tabled and accepted at the Residents' Advisory Committee.

**Extensive resident involvement
- Kensington and Chelsea TMO (ALMO)**

The TMO has been proactive in engaging residents using a range of diverse approaches. In particular the use of surgeries specifically for the BME communities. These surgeries are supported by officers from resident involvement, allocations and housing management. They have been extremely successful with the first one having over 30 residents visit the office who have not had contact with the TMO previously.

- 2.75 There are also examples of involvement taking place in Lambeth that resident involvement can draw upon.
- 2.76 As community involvement officers noted, "There are other groups out there in the community; they just need to be accessed. We need the resources and flexibility to do this. For example, we are not using the Interfaith Forum."
- 2.77 The Lambeth Youth Council has begun to extend a youth voice network across the borough by establishing a youth forum in every Town Centre Area. Young people in youth forums will be trained as video consultants to access the views of local young people and feed their opinions into relevant decision-making bodies. Members also lead or take part in a wide range of consultations on youth issues and are developing links with many local policy bodies, including Lambeth First, Scrutiny and the Executive.

- 2.78 The Salama Community group has been active since 2004 serving East African women and their children in Vauxhall, Oval, Kennington and Stockwell. It supports its members in many ways and has provided an effective means of addressing a number of problems with housing issues in recent years. Difficulties that members of this community had understanding or accessing the new Choice-based Lettings system is one example.
- 2.79 One experienced former resident association chair from Tulse Hill identified such groups as the key to helping people, especially new arrivals, feel comfortable. He said, “People need to have groups where they can speak the language and share an understanding of culture where they can gain confidence. You cannot rely on the ‘welcome pack’ provided to new residents – you need someone to make personal contact, to link up with the right networks locally”.
- 2.80 An officer representing the Commission attended a meeting of the Sheltered Housing Forum, recently established by Lambeth, as another example of an group, which engages in specific housing issues.
- 2.81 Learning from the national New Deal for Communities review also suggests that to fulfil the potential of tenant and resident involvement it may be necessary to develop new participation structures in consultation with all groups and interests that are inclusive and representative of the local population.²⁴

Recommendation 18: Groups or panels representing communities that may not be geographical could be given recognition on par with resident associations and links set up between them.

- 2.82 The model of resident involvement established by Haringey Homes impressed the Commission²⁵. It was set up as an arms length management organisation in 2006. Entirely new structures have been introduced to engage more effectively with residents. The new model is credited with dramatically increasing the number of people involved from a small handful of activists to hundreds of participants.
- 2.83 It includes a section of forums and panels and other structures designed to appeal to broaden the appeal of resident a wider range of people. Sometimes this is achieved by targeting specific groups. A description of some of them is also attached below in the leaflet.^{26,27}

²⁴ Green, Stephen and Robinson, David (2004)

²⁵ Homes for Haringey (May 2007), “*Resident Involvement Structures*”, Presentation slide

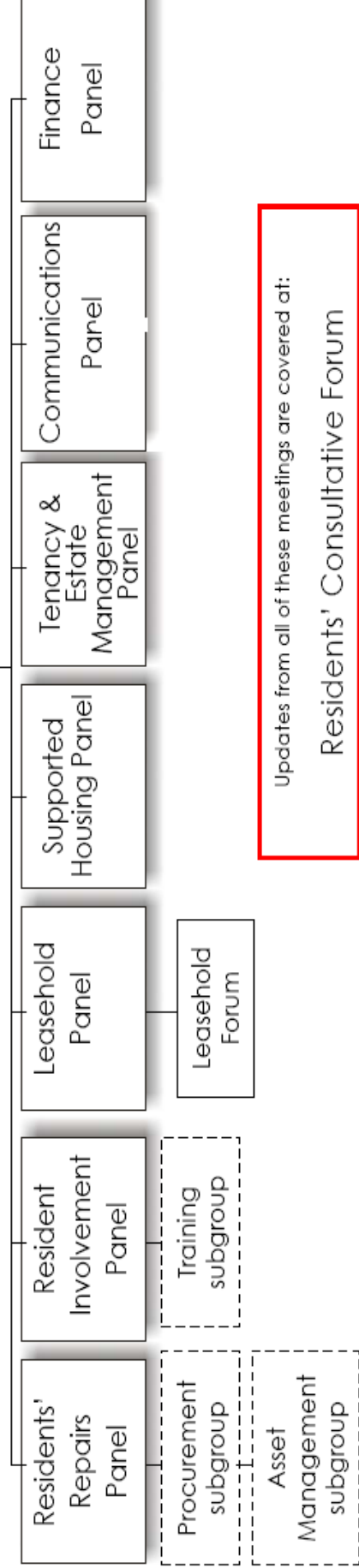
²⁶ Homes for Haringey (March 2007), “*Different views*”, Resident involvement pamphlet

²⁷ Homes for Haringey (March 2007), “*Working Together*”, Resident involvement pamphlet

Homes for Haringey resident involvement structures



**Homes for Haringey Board – Responsible for managing Haringey Council homes.
Training and support is available to help Board members to be fully effective.**



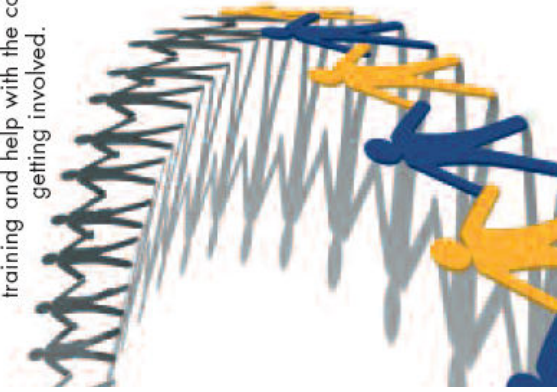
Does not show independent umbrella groups

Homes for Haringey wants you to get involved in making decisions that affect the management of your home and the services you receive.

This leaflet tells you how you can help us improve our service by getting involved in **specialist groups and panels**.

You can choose how to get involved and when. We have opportunities to suit everyone, and if you would like the sound of any of the activities listed here, we would love to hear from you.

We can offer advice, practical support, training and help with the costs of getting involved.



Suggestions, compliments and complaints

Our dedicated Feedback team is here to help us improve through learning from your suggestions, compliments and complaints. Please contact the team if there are any specific concerns or issues you wish to raise.

Leaseholders' Forum and Panel

Get involved in a yearly leaseholder forum or monthly panel. Discuss important issues that affect leaseholders across the borough.

Supported Housing Panel

This forum meets every three months and is for representatives of residents living in Homes for Haringey Supported Housing. You can raise concerns through your representative for your scheme, or stand for election yourself.

Young People's Sounding Board

This informal group of young people meets every three months to involve young people in housing and community issues.

Disabled People's Group

Come along to explore and discuss the housing needs of disabled residents. Anyone interested in disability issues is welcome to attend.

Turkish and Kurdish Speaking Forum

Come join this small and relaxed group for Turkish and Kurdish residents to discuss housing and other community issues in your own language.

Türkçe ve Kürdçe Konuşanlar Forumu

Bu küçük ve huzur veren, Türk ve Kürd sakinler grubuna katılarak bölgenizdeki konut ve diğer toplumsal sorunları tartışın.

Forum a Tirkîaxêv û Kurdîaxêvan

Werin tev li vê koma piçûk û rehet bibin, ew ji bo nişteciyên Tirk û Kurd e ku mijarên xanî û yê din ên civakî bi zimanê xwe gotûbêj bikin.

Somali Speaking forum

Come join this small and relaxed group for Somali speaking residents to discuss housing and other community issues in your own language.

Ururka Somali speaking forum

Kusoo biir oo kasoo qaybgal shirarka ururkan kaasoo ah urur jawi fiican ku shaqeeya waxuuna matalaa dadka af Soomaali ku hadla ee degan guryaha Kowsansalka. Waxaa iyadoo af Soomaali lagu wada hadlaayo looga hadlaa arimo khuseeya xaaladaha guriyeynta ee bulshada Soomaalida ah.

If none of the groups run by Homes for Haringey meets the needs of your community, call us for a chat.

Homes for Haringey wants you to get involved in making decisions that affect the management of your home and the services you receive.

This leaflet tells you about how you can improve the way Homes for Haringey talks to you and involves you in our organisation.

You can choose how to get involved and when. We have opportunities to suit everyone, and if you would like the sound of any of the activities listed here, we would love to hear from you.

We can offer advice, practical support, training and help with the costs of getting involved.

Suggestions, compliments and complaints

Our dedicated Feedback team is here to help us improve through learning from your suggestions, compliments and

complaints. Please contact the team if there are any specific concerns or issues you wish to raise.

Residents' conference

Attend our residents' conference and get involved with workshops, hear from guest speakers and much more.

Residents' Consultative Forum

A great all-round introduction to becoming involved. Come along to this general open forum run by residents, exploring a wide range of issues about housing and how your home is managed.

Communications Panel

Join this panel to look at the way we communicate with residents. Help us make sure we are communicating to you in an accessible and effective way. The communications panel helped us develop and launch our residents' magazine, Homes Zone.

Tenant Participation Panel

Come to this monthly panel and work with us to keep improving how we get residents involved in all Homes for Haringey's activities, at local and borough-wide levels.

Training sub-group

This group looks at training support for residents who get involved. Develop your skills as well as those of others by joining this group.

Money matters!

We all know that money matters, and if the way we spend our money is of interest to you, come along to our Finance Panel. Past panels have examined the Homes for Haringey budget, risk management and value for money.



Informing new communities

- 2.84 Evidence was heard that members of new communities were sometimes overlooked when campaigns promoting council services were developed.
- 2.85 A particular example was a group of Somali women, who had limited use of written English, but were vulnerable in respect of accessing housing, found they were in need of support when choice based-lettings was launched. Initially, there was no translation in the Council's literature in Somali. Fortunately through their support group, Salaama, they found the help to access the service, including using the internet, where a translation option is now available.
- 2.86 If officers had appropriate guidance on new community languages and vulnerable groups, then perhaps the appropriate translations could have been made at the launch of the new service.
- 2.87 The council took on a new contract in 2008, which should make it easier for officers to access translation services in future.
- 2.88 The translation template, pictured opposite, provided for officers on the council's intranet has remained the same for many year. It still only suggests the basic six common languages as a standard. The guidance does not point out that it is important to consider that the audience may in fact be quite different.
- 2.89 Of course, a proper equalities impact assessment should identify and target the most affected vulnerable groups.

Recommendation 19: The Commission agrees there is an urgent need to provide support and guidance to officers so that appropriate translation information is used on websites, publications and other appropriate communications. It recommends that an appropriate strategy is developed to address this issue.

Translation panel

The back of every council publication should offer a translation of the document into the council's six key community languages, as well as large print, Braille and audio tape, unless there is a valid reason not to.

Spanish

Si desea esta información en otro idioma, rogamos nos llame al

Portuguese

Se desejar esta informação noutra idioma é favor telefonar para

French

Si vous souhaitez ces informations dans une autre langue veuillez nous contacter au

If you would like this information in large print, Braille, audio tape or another language, please contact us on

Bengali

এই তথ্য অন্য কোনো ভাষায় আপনার প্রয়োজন হলে অনুগ্রহ করে ফোন করুন

Twi

Se wope saa nkaeboy yi wo kasa foforo mu a fre

Yoruba

Tí ẹ ba fẹ ìmoràn yí, ní èdè Òmíràn, ẹjò, ẹ kàn wà l'ágogo

The text translates as:

'If you would like this information in your language, please telephone...'

You need to add your telephone number at the end of each translated sentence, and at the end of the Braille and audio tape sentence.

Source: Lambeth Intranet²⁸

²⁸ Lambeth intranet page, "Translation Panel", <http://intranet.lambeth.gov.uk>

Moving towards an excellent service

- 2.90 The Resident Involvement group selected Homes for Haringey and Hounslow Homes for a benchmark study as both are ALMOs which have achieved, respectively, two and three Audit Commission stars, following inspection and which have a broadly similar housing management challenge demographic to Lambeth.
- 2.91 The figures seems to suggest that a significant change in the way that resources are allocated to resident participation may be required if a similar model were to be developed here in Lambeth.
- 2.92 A more detailed analysis would be required to test this however.

Organisation	Homes for Haringey	Hounslow Homes	Lambeth
Tenants	16,500	13,000	26,500
Leaseholders	4,500	2000	9,930
Total stock	21,000	15,000	36,430
Resident Involvement staff	Central team of 10.5	Central team of 6	1 in each housing area = 6 Central team = 3.5 Total 9.5
Stock to staff ratio	1:2000	1:2500	1:3835
Registered RAs	40	41	65
% of stock covered	Centralised consultation panels	54.6%	44.5%
Tenants' Training	£5000	£12000	£14,000
Grants to tenant groups	£17,400	£40,000	£65,000
Residents conference	£15,400	-	£40,000
Employee costs	£425,000	£260,000	£360,000
Resource total	£462,800	£312,000	£439,040
Expenditure per household	£22.04/household	£20.80/household	£12.05/household

- 2.93 The Audit Commission's inspection guidance on resident involvement under KLOE5 describes a characteristic of an excellent service as one which:

"Has the funding and staff in place to make effective resident involvement happen either through dedicated staff resources or through mainstreamed resident involvement service delivery."²⁹

Recommendation 20: The Commission requests that a report is prepared and reported to the Housing Scrutiny Committee in the 2009/2010 cycle on how developments in resident involvement service delivery are moving Lambeth towards an excellent KLOE5 standard.

²⁹ Audit Commission (July 2007), *Housing Inspectorate Key Lines of Enquiry, Landlord Services: Resident involvement*

Section 3 - Conclusions

- 3.1 The Resident Participation Commission has barely scratched the surface in its enquiries into resident involvement here in Lambeth.
- 3.2 What has been discovered is that there is an enthusiasm to become involved, and to widen involvement across a more diverse range of groups. Currently much of the work is done by a small number of active residents who need more support from their communities, but often find it difficult to attract new participants.
- 3.3 Many people who are currently not involved do not feel confident about engaging with traditional arrangements of resident participation.
- 3.4 Existing resident structures are an important resource, but the findings of the commission show that they do not suit everyone. We need to recognise alternative ways of engaging a wider range of groups in the community must be adopted to encourage them to become involved.
- 3.5 Identifying and removing the barriers to new participants is an important starting point.
- 3.6 Building capacity for the future and providing residents with the skills to participate is an essential part of developing the pool of talent needed for expanding effective resident involvement.
- 3.7 There are also a number of active organisations, around Lambeth, which provide support to particular parts of the community, such as older persons, youth council and new community groups, which could be brought under the resident involvement umbrella. New types of forum and panel need to be considered. Evidence elsewhere in London has shown this to have a dramatic effect in expanding participation.
- 3.8 There is also a window of opportunity for developing facilities such as community centres and new technologies, which would benefit resident associations and similar groups in attracting the involvement of wider parts of the community.
- 3.9 Finally, the commission recognises that work in Lambeth Living and work on the new Tenants Compact is going to be vital in developing an excellent and fit for purpose resident involvement service.
- 3.10 Innovation is crucial in developing resident involvement in council owned housing if Lambeth communities are going to be enabled.

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