

Mayor and Cabinet			
Report Title	Comments of the Housing Select Committee on Housing Matters: New Investment and Delivery Options for Achieving Lewisham's Housing Objectives		
Key Decision	No	Item No.	6 (Addendum)
Ward	All		
Contributors	Housing Select Committee		
Class	Part 1	Date	11 July 2012

1. Summary

- 1.1 This report informs the Mayor and Cabinet of the comments and views of the Housing Select Committee, arising from discussions held on the officer report on *Housing Matters: New Investment and Delivery Options for Achieving Lewisham's Housing Objectives*, considered at its meeting on 4 July 2012.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 The Mayor is recommended to note the unanimous views of the Housing Select Committee as set out in section three of this referral and agree that the Executive Director for Customer Services be asked to respond.

3. Housing Select Committee views

- 3.1 On 4 July 2012, the Housing Select Committee considered a draft of the "Housing Matters" stock options appraisal report scheduled for consideration by Mayor and Cabinet on 11 July 2012.

- 3.2 The Committee believes that, whichever housing investment and delivery option is pursued by the Council, the following should be its principal aims:

- (1) Keeping rents low
- (2) Ensuring all properties are brought up to the Decent Homes standard
- (3) Building new social housing
- (4) Reducing Right to Buy options
- (5) Maximising tenant/leaseholder involvement
- (6) Creating a community housing scheme which is local and accountable
- (7) Maintaining and adding to sheltered and extra care housing for older residents in their community and with the support of health partners
- (8) Freeing up under-occupied properties.

- 3.3 The Committee believes that the following three options should be consulted on with residents:

- (1) Remaining with the current ALMO structure but with elected tenants forming the majority on the Board

- (2) Bringing the ALMO back within the direct management of the Council but with elected tenants forming the majority on the Board
- (3) Transferring to a mutual organisation with elected tenants forming the majority on the Board.

3.4 The Committee strongly recommends that the option of transferring to an existing Registered Provider is discounted.

3.5 The Committee believes that consideration must be given to how it can be ensured that a tenant led organisation will have the ambition to build new social housing rather than solely focussing on keeping rents low.

3.6 The Committee would like the following clarification/information to be provided to the Mayor on 11 July 2012 during consideration of this matter:

- (1) Confirmation that the 250 properties to be developed within the next five years will all be social housing and that any other tenure will be on top of that figure, not part of it.
- (2) Paragraph 11.57 of the report seen by the Committee, suggests that the process for guarding against demutualisation is exceptionally complicated, but we already have an example of a mutual established in the borough (Phoenix Community Housing) that has easily and successfully guarded against this possibility.
- (3) Paragraph 14.4 of the report seen by the Committee, provides some information on the uncertainties in the modelling that has been carried out, but the Committee feels that more information on the sensitivity of the modelling to changes in rents and the cost of borrowing is required.

4. Financial Implications

4.1 There are no financial implications arising out of this report per se; but there are financial implications arising from carrying out the action proposed by the Committee.

5. Legal Implications

5.1 The Constitution provides for Select Committees to refer reports to the Mayor and Cabinet, who are obliged to consider the report and the proposed response from the relevant Executive Director; and report back to the Committee within two months (not including recess).

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Housing Matters: New Investment and Delivery Options for achieving Lewisham's Housing Objectives – Officer Report to Housing Select Committee (04.07.12)

If you have any queries on this report, please contact Charlotte Dale, Scrutiny Manager (0208 3149534), or Kevin Flaherty, Head of Committee Business (0208 3149327).