

Housing Select Committee			
Title	Response from Mayor and Cabinet to matters referred by the Select Committee – Mayoral response on the democratisation of the Lewisham Homes Board		
Contributor	Executive Director for Resources (Head of Business & Committee)	Item 4	
Class	Part 1 (Open)	Date	11 September 2013

1. Summary

This report informs members of the response given at Mayor and Cabinet to a referral in respect of recommendations to the Mayor following the discussions held on the Housing Matters report which the Select Committee considered on January 8 2013.

2. Purpose of the report

To report to members the response given at Mayor and Cabinet to recommendations made by the Select Committee on the democratisation of the Lewisham Homes board as part of their wider consideration of housing matters.

3. Recommendation

The Select Committee is recommended to receive the Mayoral response to their consideration of the democratisation of the Lewisham Homes Board.

4. Background

4.1 The Mayor considered the report entitled 'Comments of the Housing Select Committee on Housing Matters: the results of the consultation and way forward' (attached as Appendix A) as an addendum to the report 'Housing Matters Update' at the Mayor & Cabinet meeting held on January 16 2013.

4.2 The outcome of that consideration as detailed in the minutes of the January 16 2013 Mayor & Cabinet meeting was as follows:

The report was presented by the Cabinet Member for Customer Services and by a representative of the Executive Director for Customer Services.

The Mayor was then addressed by the Chair of the Housing Select Committee, who presented an addendum report. He outlined the Select Committee's broad support for the proposals and highlighted the need to create an ethos within any organisation responsible for housing that was committed to building more houses. He also urged Lewisham Homes to develop tenants who could serve on its Management Committee.

'In response, the Mayor indicated he intended to hold a dialogue with other Registered Social Landlords in Lewisham to see if the Lewisham Homes stock improvement proposals could be replicated. In terms of developing tenant representatives who could serve on the Lewisham Homes Board, he said he was happy to pursue the suggestion in principle but had to be sure actions were pursued at the right time.

Having considered the officer report, and the presentations by the Cabinet Member for Customer Services, Councillor Susan Wise, and the Chair of the Housing Select Committee, Councillor Carl Handley, the Mayor then:

RESOLVED that

(i) the findings of the discussion with residents about the possible options for addressing Lewisham's housing challenges be noted;

(ii) the potential options for continuing the conversation with residents and the associated strengths and weaknesses of each be noted;

(iii) as there was limited support expressed among residents for the option of transfer to an existing housing association, and because the resident-led option offers greater potential to respond to residents concerns about rents and security of tenure for new as well as existing residents, transfer to an existing housing association be no longer pursued as part of this process;

(iv) as residents prefer retention with the ALMO to retention with a return to Council Management, and because a return to Council management at this stage would put at risk the delivery of the current Decent Homes programme, the option of a return to Council management of the stock be no longer pursued as part of this process;

(v) the two possible options remaining options be noted namely:

1. that the Council ceases all further options appraisal activities, retains the ALMO as is, and works within the budgetary limits the Council faces as a landlord, or

2. that the Council works alongside residents, Lewisham Homes and other bodies to better understand how, by retaining but evolving Lewisham Homes - with a view to a possible transfer of ownership to Lewisham Homes as a resident-led organisation – it might attract further investment, increase resident control, deliver residents' aspirations and address their concerns; and

(vi) on the basis of the appraisal of the options set out and having considered the further information including the required further financial and technical assessments set out , option 2 should be pursued.'

- 4.3 Subsequent to that meeting the decision of the Mayor was reviewed by the Overview & Scrutiny Business Panel on January 29 2013. The Business Panel agreed a reference report should be sent to the Mayor (attached as Appendix B).

- 4.4 The Mayor considered the Business Panel's submission on February 13 2013 and his conclusion as shown in the minutes was as follows:

(b) Housing Matters

In respect of the suggestion that Lewisham Homes should, as a matter of urgency, be asked to consider the election of Tenants and Leaseholders as Lewisham Home Board members, the Mayor reaffirmed his previously expressed position that he was happy to pursue the suggestion in principle but had to be sure actions were pursued at the right time.

The Mayor concurred with the request that a further assessment of costs and additional information on sites should come to the Mayor and Cabinet at an early stage and to inform the Council's Housing Strategy and that this could also be considered by both the Business Panel and the Housing Select Committee.

5. Conclusion

- 5.1 The Select Committee is asked to note the Mayor's support for the principle of a democratisation of the Lewisham Homes board and that he is committed to pursuing the proposal at an appropriate time.

Background papers

Mayor & Cabinet minutes January 16 and February 13 2013

If you have any queries on this report, please contact Kevin Flaherty, Head of Business & Committee, 0208 314 9327