

 <p>Brent</p>	<p>Housing Scrutiny Committee 27 July 2017</p> <p>Report from the Strategic Director of Performance, Policy & Partnership</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">Wards Affected: All</p>	
<p>Co-opted Members</p>	

1. Summary

- 1.1. The paper sets out a suggested process for appointing co-opted members to the committee, taking into account evidence from other London boroughs which have co-opted members to their housing scrutiny committees.

2. Recommendation(s)

- 2.1. The Committee's membership be extended to two (non-voting) co-opted members appointed following a competitive recruitment process as outlined within the report; and
- 2.2. The Committee note that appointments will be formally made at the next meeting of Full Council on 18 September 2017.

3. Detail

- 3.1. Following the decision of Cabinet in April that housing management services to the council's tenants and leaseholders will be provided by the council itself, the Housing Scrutiny Committee was established during the May 2017 Full Council meeting, and allowed for co-optees to be included as the committee saw appropriate. Having taken into account the views of the BHP member-resident panel, and following discussion at the committee's work planning meeting on 27 June 2017, members agreed that it is important to ensure the voices of BHP tenants and leaseholders continue to be heard, by co-opting one of each to the committee (while further exploring how those of registered providers could also be heard).
- 3.2. An examination of Housing Scrutiny Committees with co-opted members at LB Islington and Tower Hamlets shaped the recommendations for this report.

- 3.3. LB Islington has one elected and one appointed co-opted member. The contribution from the co-opted members have provided insight from everyday events faced by residents. While the elected members were able to provide a degree of insight from the policy perspective and some of the operational implementation of actions undertaken by the Housing team, Islington's experience was that appointed members were able to shed more light on the experience from the user's perspective, as they had been co-opted on the basis of their skills and experience.
- 3.4. LB Tower Hamlets recruited two persons (a tenant and a leaseholder) resident within estates run by Tower Hamlets Homes (THH). The co-opted members have actively contributed across a number of housing issues brought to committee. Given their long-term residency, this ensured insight which provided tangible examples of the user experience of services delivered by the Housing team.
- 3.5. Undertaking a recruitment process ensured TH were able to identify persons motivated to contribute meaningfully to scrutiny with the required experience and skills to decipher, often complicated housing rules and policies.
- 3.6. Drawing upon the experience of these two authorities, the committee can learn some lessons to inform its own process for co-opting a council tenant and leaseholder. A process to select co-optees on the basis of their skills and experience appears to yield the best chance of valuable contributions to the work of the committee, rather than elections.
- 3.7. Other councils have found that achieving full attendance from co-optees at meetings can prove to be an issue, and it will be important that candidates' commitment to the role is explored in any selection process, as well as emphasising the value and importance of their contributions. It is important that the role description which is publicised to potential candidates is fully clear about the extent of co-optees' rights and responsibilities on the committee.
- 3.8. By the same token, it will be important to be clear about the limits of the role. For example, co-optees will have no formal voting rights on the committee (as this is not permitted by law); and for the 2017/18 year at least, the work programme will have been agreed, so there will be limited scope to influence this.
- 3.9. The proposed method for selecting and appointing BHP tenant and leaseholder co-optees to the committee is set out below.
- 3.10. **Selecting co-opted members for Brent:** Both co-opted members should be resident within Brent Council property with one tenant and one leaseholder.
- 3.11. The interview panel should include:
 - Chair of Housing Scrutiny Committee;
 - Vice Chair of Housing Scrutiny Committee;

- Manager, Policy & Scrutiny;
- Operational Director Housing, Community Wellbeing.

3.12. Timeline:

- Agreement of selection process – 27 July;
- Advertisement period – 31 Jul to 18 Aug;
- Interview period– 21-25 Aug;
- Offer of appointment made to short-listed co-opted members – 29 Aug;
- Submission to Full Council meeting - 18 September.

4.0 Financial Implications

4.1 As agreed at Full Council in May the cost of the co-opted member allowances will be £226 per person (which is the same as the for education co-opted members on the Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee). Schedule 1 (p328), Part 8 of the Constitution, sets out the payment for each co-opted member at £226 per person. The maximum cost is expected to be £452 in any one financial year for these co-optees (i.e. £226 for 2 members). The cost of the allowances will be funded from, and can be contained within, the overall Members Allowances budget.

5.0 Legal Implications

5.1 The Council has the power to co-opt people from outside the council to sit on scrutiny committees. The appointment of co-opted members is a non-delegable Full Council function and the persons appointed would not be permitted to vote.

6.0 Equality Implications

6.1 As with all Council appointments, the recruitment and selection process must be inclusive and accessible. The two opportunities should be advertised via communication channels that reach as many tenants and leaseholders as possible, including people with disabilities. Reasonable adjustments should be considered upon request. Appointed Co-opted members will be supported to ensure that they fully understand their role and responsibilities.

7.0 Staffing/Accommodation Implications (if appropriate)

7.1 None

Background Papers

- None

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