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## **APPOINTMENT OF TENANT LIAISON OFFICER**

### **1 SUMMARY**

- 1.1 Members to consider the recommendations of the Tenant Involvement Steering Group, which met on 23 January 2002, to consider ways of improving tenant participation in the District.

### **2 BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 Tenant participation at Rochford has always traditionally been at a low level, except for a short period of time when the Council were considering Large Scale Voluntary Transfer (LSVT) of its housing stock in 1988, when tenant groups became very active.
- 2.2 Originally, the District was covered by two tenant groups. The Rayleigh and Rawreth Tenant's Association served the western part of the district, whilst the Rochford and Great Stambridge Tenant's Association served the east.
- 2.3 Following the tenant's vote for retention of local authority control of the housing stock, both associations suffered dwindling membership, although there were stalwart members of each group who regularly attended tenant liaison meetings and attended Committee and Sub-Committee meetings as advisers. This process acts as a valuable contribution to Officer research and Member debate.
- 2.4 Unfortunately, the Rochford and Great Stambridge Tenant's Association collapsed in December 2000, when the Chairman resigned and there is no representation from the eastern part of the District.
- 2.5 The Rayleigh and Rawreth Tenant's Association comprises of a core membership of around 5–6 tenants, all of whom come from sheltered housing schemes or are of pensionable age. The group held regular meetings but attendance and decision topics tend to be centred around sheltered housing.

### **3 TENANT PARTICIPATION COMPACT**

- 3.1 In March 2000, the Council entered into a compact (an agreement) with tenants and agreed an action plan for service review and improvement.
- 3.2 One of the aspects of that action plan which has yet to be seen to come to fruition is the desire to increase tenant participation by the appointment of a Tenant Liaison Officer.

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**4 PROPOSAL**

- 4.1 On 23 January 2002, the Tenant Involvement Steering Group met, to consider three reports from the Head of Service, each of which, highlighted deficiencies in Rochford Service Delivery because of lack of tenant involvement in the management of the properties they occupy.
- 4.2 The Steering Group considered the DTLR guidance note on "Developing Good Practice in Tenant Participation" which set out the practical issues surrounding tenant participation, whether successes or problems.
- 4.3 The Steering Group members felt there was a real need to improve tenant participation as a key to success in housing management and are recommending the appointment of a part-time Tenant Liaison Officer to help develop or instigate tenant groups across the District.
- 4.4 Two areas in the Rochford district and two areas within the Great Wakering district were identified as being where inroads could be made.

**5 CONCLUSIONS**

- 5.1 Tenant participation continues to be an essential element to housing management and one where the Council fails poorly. The appointment of a Tenant Liaison Officer with specific duties to work to increase tenant participation and improve liaison arrangements would work to the Council's benefit.

**6 RECOMMENDATION**

- 6.1 It is proposed that the committee agrees in principle to the appointment of a Part-Time Tenant Liaison Officer on a three-year term contract, subject to a further detailed and costed report being made to the Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

S J Clarkson

Head of Revenue and Housing Management

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**Background Papers:**

The DTLR Guidance Note  
Tenant Participation Surveys  
Audit Committee BVPI out-turn figures 2,000/01

For further information please contact Steve Clarkson on:-

Tel:- 01702 546366 ext 3120

E-Mail:- [steve.clarkson@rochford.gov.uk](mailto:steve.clarkson@rochford.gov.uk)