

LARGE SCALE VOLUNTARY TRANSFER OF HOUSING STOCK

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 The Committee is asked to note the result of the recent secret ballot of the Council's tenants as to whether they are in favour of the proposal to transfer their homes to Rochford Housing Association
- 1.2 The Committee is asked to establish a Rochford Housing Transfer Members Panel.

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 The Electoral Reform Ballot Services, who conducted the secret ballot, advised on 15 December 2006 that the result of the ballot was as follows:

Question:

“Are you in favour of the proposal to transfer the ownership and management of your home to Rochford Housing Association?”

Tenant Constituency

Total number of eligible tenants	1920
Total number of votes received	1497
Overall rate of participation.....	78.0%
Total number of spoilt/blank ballot papers ..	6
Therefore, total number of valid votes counted	1491

Result

Number voting YES	1234	(82.8% of the valid vote)
Number voting NO	257	(17.2% of the valid vote)
TOTAL	1491	(100% of the valid vote)

Service Tenant Constituency

Total number of eligible tenants	12
Total number of votes received	11
Overall rate of participation.....	91.7%
Total number of spoilt/blank ballot papers ..	0
Therefore, total number of valid votes counted	11

Result

Number voting YES	11	(100% of the valid vote)
Number voting NO	0	(0% of the valid vote)
TOTAL	11	(100% of the valid vote)

Tolerated Trespasser Constituency

Total number of eligible tenants	81
Total number of votes received	41
Overall rate of participation.....	50.6%
Total number of spoilt/blank ballot papers ..	0
Therefore, total number of valid votes counted	41

Result

Number voting YES	29	(70.7% of the valid vote)
Number voting NO	12	(29.3% of the valid vote)
TOTAL	41	(100% of the valid vote)

(Ballot papers will be stored securely for six months before being destroyed).

The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) has confirmed that no appeals or objections had been received during the Stage 1 (ballot) consultation period.

Tenants, Councillors, local MP's and other interested parties were immediately informed by letter or email. A formal public announcement was made on Monday 18 December 2006 and a press notice was issued.

3 THE ROCHFORD HOUSING TRANSFER MEMBERS PANEL

- 3.1 As the transfer process moves into the detailed implementation stage the Committee is invited to appoint three Members to serve on a body to be known as the Rochford Housing Transfer Members Panel.
- 3.2 The Transfer Members Panel (TMP) is intended to provide advice and guidance to those Council officers responsible for conducting negotiations with Rochford Housing Association and its group parent Hereward Housing. Experience elsewhere indicates that, from time to time, as such negotiations

progress, it will be helpful for the officers and consultants to have available a Members 'sounding board' to guide decisions on the draft terms. The TMP will not be making executive decisions since the terms negotiated will ultimately require to be ratified by the Council.

- 3.3 The terms of reference of the Rochford Housing Transfer Members Panel (TMP) are that its Members will work with Rochford District Council officers during the post-ballot pre-transfer stage, to ensure the timely progress of negotiations, taking into consideration information from a variety of sources including the Department for Communities and Local Government, the Government Office East (GO-East), appointed specialist legal and financial consultants and council officers.
- 3.4 The objective of the TMP will be to ensure that the most advantageous arrangements for the Council are agreed in the transfer of its housing stock to the Rochford Housing Association. The TMP will be invited to comment and decide upon interim issues that arise on which Council officers and advisors require Member guidance during negotiations with Rochford Housing Association. The final decision upon acceptance of the proposed transfer terms will be a matter for the full Council.
- 3.5 It is suggested that the TMP should consist of 3 members including the Leader of the Council and the Chairman of the Community Services Committee. The TMP may need to meet at fairly short notice to consider issues that have arisen.

4 RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The terms of the proposed transfer will be subject to final agreement by the full Council following rigorous examination by all parties including the Housing Corporation and DCLG before it can proceed. In addition the Council will continue to be advised by specialist consultants and its own officers.

5 RECOMMENDATION

- 5.1 That the Committee **RESOLVES**

- (1) To note the result of the ballot of the Council's tenants on the proposal to transfer their homes to Rochford Housing Association.
- (2) To establish the Rochford Housing Transfer Members Panel as set out in this report.

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Background Papers:-

Housing Transfer Manual (DCLG)

Supplement to the Housing Transfer Manual (DCLG)

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