

**Committee:** HEALTH AND HOUSING COMMITTEE

**Agenda Item**

**Date:** October 27<sup>th</sup>, 2005

**8**

**Title:** **IMPLEMENTATION OF NEW  
CONSTITUTION**

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Item for decision

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## Summary

This report advises the Committee of the need to report back to the Full Council at its meeting in December regarding issues relating to the implementation of the new Constitution following the Council decision taken on 18<sup>th</sup> October 2005. It recommends a number of suggestions to assist the new Community Committee with its work.

## Recommendations

1. That the Housing Strategy Working Group continues to meet on an occasional basis to consider, in detail, specific issues and make recommendations to the Community Committee. The future need for this Working Group to be reviewed by the Council at its annual meeting in 2006.
2. That the newly appointed Homelessness Task Group continues to meet to consider the specific issues relating to homelessness provision in the District until it makes a final report/recommendation to the Community Committee. The future life of the Task Group to be reviewed by the Community Committee after the annual Council meeting in 2006.
3. That the Tenant Forum be invited to send 2 representatives (one being the Chair) to attend the Community Committee in a non-voting capacity.
4. That the annual rents setting meeting for 2006/07 be dealt with during a normal meeting of the Community Committee.
5. That any presentation takes place prior to the meetings of the Community Committee allowing meetings to commence at 7.30 p.m.
6. That the Community Committee advises Officers to notify Members of issues 'for noting' in the Members Bulletin.

## Background Papers

The following papers were referred to by the author in the preparation of this report and are available for inspection from the author.

1. Constitution of the Council adopted 18<sup>th</sup> October 2005.

2. Relevant minutes of the previous Health & Housing Committee relating to the Tenant Forum and its representation on the Health & Housing Committee and Homelessness Task Group.

### Impact

Communication/Consultation	The Health & Housing Committee has encouraged Tenant Participation and it is felt essential this should continue.
Community Safety	None.
Equalities	None.
Finance	Minor.
Human Rights	None.
Legal Implications	There is a need to ensure that Homelessness provision is addressed in accordance with statute.
Ward-specific impacts	All.
Workforce/Workplace	Implementation of new constitution will require officer attendance at more meetings.

## **Situation**

1. This report is presented to the Committee in order for the Committee to make suggestions to the Council to ensure that the new Community Committee operates efficiently.
2. All of the current functions of the Health & Housing Committee will transfer to the new Community Committee. In addition, there will be significant other responsibilities for this Committee.
3. As the new Committee is expected to deal with policy and strategic decisions it will be necessary to structure the agenda so that the Committee can concentrate on its prime duty.
4. The Committee may be required to allocate time on an as and when basis on issues that emerge from the Area Panels.

## **Current Task Groups/Tenant Forum**

5. The Health & Housing Committee has encouraged tenant participation over a number of years and it would seem appropriate that arrangements continue in this respect. Accordingly I would suggest that the Community Committee continues to invite the same Tenant Forum representation on its Committee.
6. In the past the Council appointed Housing Strategy Working Party (HSWP) has considered significant issues in detail and reported back to the Health & Housing Committee with recommendations. At the September meeting of Health & Housing a Homelessness Task Group was established for a specific project. Again I see significant work for these groups over a period of time and I would suggest that they should continue. There will be a need for the future of the HSWP to be reviewed by the Full Council at its annual meeting or for it to become a time limited Task Group established by the Community Committee and I suggest that the future of the Homelessness Task Group be reviewed after the first meeting of the Community Committee after the annual Council meeting in 2006.

## **Other Issues**

7. In order to assist the new Community Committee with its workload I would suggest that the Committee recommends that as a general principle, any presentation takes place prior to the normal 7.30 p.m. start of the meeting. Otherwise the Community Committee may not be in a position to commence its work until well into the evening.
8. In an attempt to keep the agenda focussed on policy/strategic decisions, I would suggest that issues for noting only should be reported to Members via the Members Bulletin. This will impose a discipline on officers to ensure this facility is used.

9. In recent years a special meeting to decide the annual rent setting has been held. In view of the fact that the Council's discretion has been reduced in this area, I feel that this issue should be dealt with at a normal meeting of the Community Committee in late January 2006. The situation could then be reviewed for future years. To support this proposal it should be noted that these special meetings usually only last a few minutes and attendance has not always been high. I would still recommend that Tenant Forum has a special or normal meeting to fully address the issue prior to the Community Committee meeting.

### Risk Analysis

10. The following have been assessed as the potential risks associated with this issue.

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
That Tenant Forum will feel excluded from decision-making.	Low	High	Tenant Forum issues have been fully addressed.