

TENANTS FORUM

Possible Changes to the Constitution

During the meeting of the Tenants Forum on October 10, tenants reviewed the constitution of the forum and considered how it could be improved. Comments made by tenants were collated and will be passed to the Head of Democratic and Legal Services for consideration.

The forum was provided with a number of points for consideration:

- How can we best achieve a balance between clarity and flexibility?
- Are the clauses relating to representation and voting clear?
- Do we need to strengthen ethical standards?
- Are there particular areas that need updating?
- Should we mention the role of the Tenants' Overview and Scrutiny Panel, so that it has official status?

The forum provided the following feedback regarding the consultation:

GENERAL

- The existing constitution was considered to be ideal in terms of its length, level of detail and the flexibility it provided. It was felt that making the constitution too rigid could be counter-productive.

REPRESENTATION AND VOTING

- Regarding the four year term of representation, the forum was unsure of the value of the restriction and proposed its removal.
- Sanctions could be imposed on members who had not attended the forum for six months without good reason – disqualification?
- 1.2 Proposed that any *voting* member of the forum can appoint a representative and that representative should be a tenant or leaseholder of KBC and must sign the code of conduct.

CHAIR

- Rules on voting for the Chair and Deputy Chair should be made clearer especially with regard to who can vote and for whom. (i.e. should tenants be able to vote for the chair who is a councillor and should councillors be able to vote for the Deputy Chair who is a tenant.)
- Why could a forum member not hold the position of Chairman; why did it

have to be a borough councillor? JC to check with Democratic and Legal Services

- Ballots for the election of the chair and vice chair should be secret.
- Reference should be made to the fact that the Chair and Deputy alternate chairing meetings of the Forum.

OFFICERS

- No comments

FUNCTIONS

- 5.1 (i) replace 'matters of concern to tenants' with 'management of council housing and neighbourhoods, and wider housing policy' – more specific
- 5.1 (iii) to comment or make recommendations.....

TERMS OF REFERENCE

- Removal of points 6.7-6.9 in their entirety as they were now rendered obsolete.
- The Tenant Overview and Scrutiny Panel should be mentioned, alongside any other sub-group convened by the forum in future.

ETHICAL STANDARDS

- Ethical standards were considered to be more appropriate in relation to normal council committees. Linda Nash would be tasked with researching what standards other tenants' forums adhered to.
- Sanctions should be in place if representatives do not abide with the code of conduct.
- The constitution should refer to the Code of Conduct that forum members are required to sign.
- An annual review of the Code of Conduct and the constitution should take place to ensure both documents are current.