

Bringing housing management (THH) services back in-house update

Housing & Regeneration Scrutiny Sub-Committee
19 October 2023

Nicola Klinger (Programme Lead)



Purpose

- To provide the committee with an update on the THH Insourcing programme.
- To set out how the committee can continue to monitor the performance of services for tenants and leaseholders.
- To consult the committee on proposals for an enhanced residents' panel.



Programme Delivery Approach



Two key phases for insourcing

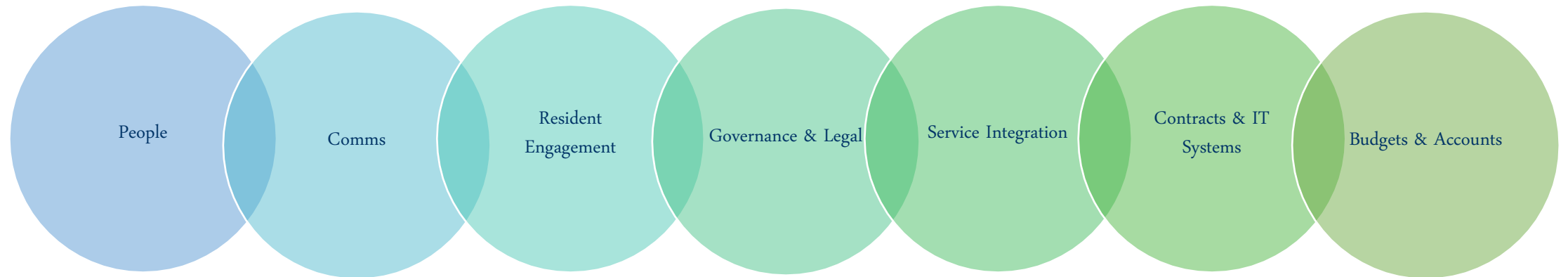
- **Phase 1: Transferring services back in-house on 1 November 2023**
- **Phase 2: Delivering of the vision for housing management services**

Key principles

- Service continuity and minimal disruption for residents
- Seamless transition for residents and staff
- Transfer on 1 November timeframe
- Review considering service models and integration, contracts, branding and efficiencies to deliver the vision for housing management services to be completed and implemented once services are in-house and the council has a better opportunity to review budgets, service structures and service delivery.



Programme Workstreams



Key deliverables



Workstream	Phase One	Phase Two
People	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transfer of staff (consultations and TUPE transfer) Staff inductions and events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advancing the vision for future housing services, including consultation & engagement with staff and residents Organisational development
Comms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal and external comms on transfer Transfer of intranet 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Move to council branding Advancing the vision for future housing services, including consultation & engagement with staff and residents
Resident Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of tenant and leaseholder involvement and scrutiny strategy & arrangements Engagement events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tenants and Leaseholder Housing Forums to co-produce improvements and develop vision Refreshed Tenants & Leaseholders Engagement strategy
Governance and Legal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of internal governance arrangements Review of THH Policies and Procedures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation of new governance arrangements Wind-up of company
Service Integration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lift and shift of services into two new council housing directorates (Neighbourhood Services and Housing Asset Management) HR, Comms, Executive Support, Health & Safety and Finance to lift and shift into LBTH corporate services Preparatory work to review service integration opportunities including Parking & ASB teams 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Embedding services into council target operating model and considering service improvement opportunities Review and implementation of services integration opportunities and reorganisation of services Customer access strategy project
Contracts & IT Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contract novation/termination Transfer staff onto IT systems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategic review to join-up contracts and procurements Integration of IT systems
Budgets & Accounts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transfer of accounts and budgets Budget setting process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of SLAs and continued review of budgets via budget setting process



Oversight of the in-house functions



- **There will no longer be a client relationship between the council and THH following transfer.** New internal governance arrangements will be established to ensure the Lead Member and Mayor continue to have oversight and housing services are joined-up to strategically tackle issues.
- Services will become **embedded into the council structure and will follow corporate performance monitoring methods.**
- Residents will continue have **opportunities to scrutinise and influence services, strategies and policies.**
- Under the new Social Housing Regulatory Regime, the council will be reporting back to the Regulator of Social of Housing on its performance against new Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) which all social housing landlords have collating since April 2023. These include a range of indicators on how the social landlord is performing in terms of:
 - **property safety, condition and repair,**
 - **as well as asking tenants for their views on how the landlord is performing across a range of measures including repairs, listening and action on their views, keeping them informed, treating them fairly and with respect, and how they handle complaints**
- The Regulator will also proactively inspect the council as a large stock holding social provider at least once every four years to ensure compliance with the Regulator's Consumer Standards.
- **HRSSC will receive six-monthly reports, aligned with other Registered Providers.** If the committee wish to scrutinise performance more regularly, the Chair could consider meeting outside of committee meetings and having access to data quarterly.



Resident Engagement



- Two resident engagement events held to understand how residents would like to be engaged with
- Periodic newsletters to residents who were further interested in being involved following the consultation on the future of housing management services
- Two models proposed for enhanced residents' panel – resident only and mixed panel.
- Consulting with stakeholders on the enhanced residents' panel including current Residents' Panel, Joint Steering Group, THH Board, Mayor & Members and Housing & Regeneration Scrutiny Sub-Committee
- First tenants/leaseholders housing forum to be held in November
- Meeting with TRAs pre-transfer to inform
- Communications with all residents included in comms plan
- Following transfer continued work to develop vision and strategy for engagement



Future Engagement with Residents



- LBTH & THH are considering how to ensure strategic resident engagement in housing services when the THH Board and its sub-committees are wound up.
- The Resident Engagement Working Group are seeking feedback from the committee on the future of resident (tenant and leaseholder) engagement post-insourcing.
- Work undertaken includes research into other local authorities and engagement with stakeholders
- There are new standards to consider as introduced by the Social Housing Regulation Act 2023
- Two models have emerged:

1) Resident-led panel/board

2) Mixed panel/board



Consumer standards



Social Housing Regulation Act 2023

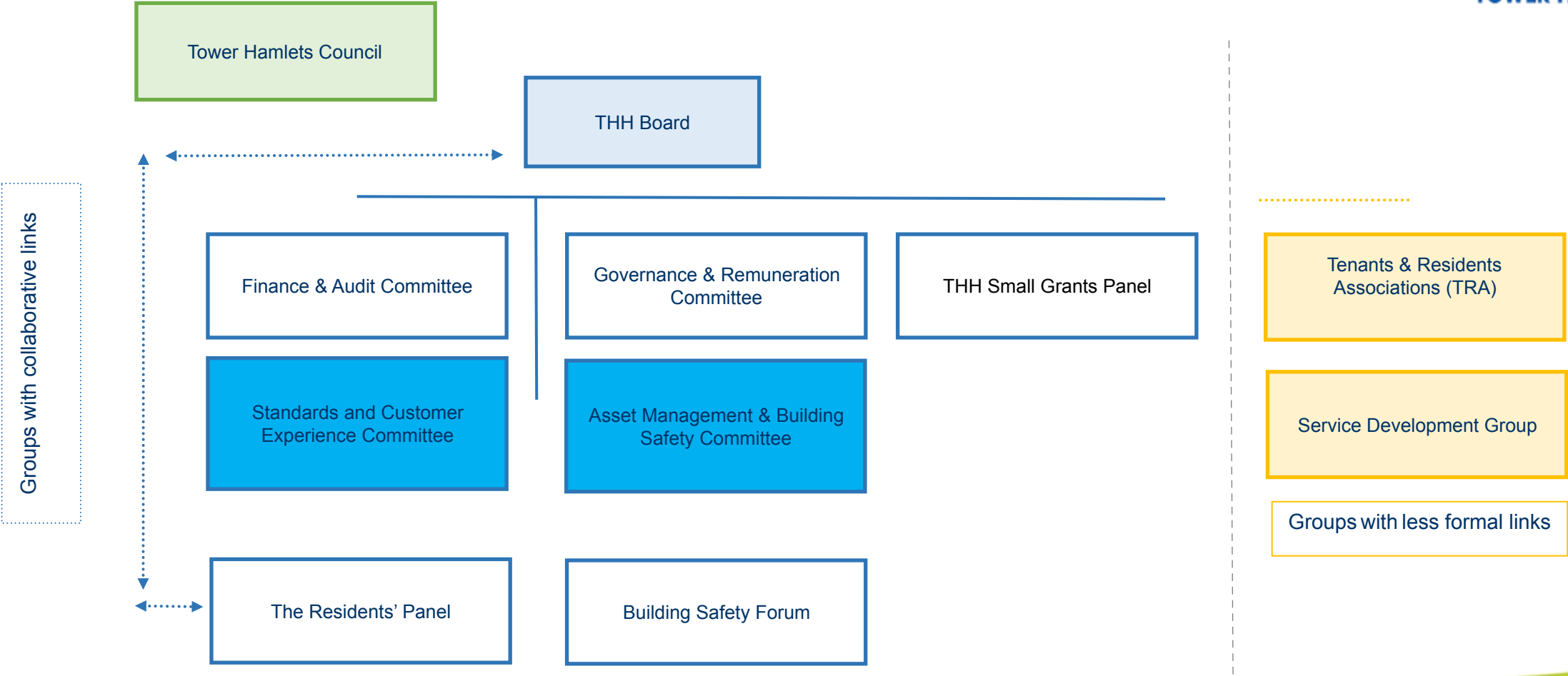
- Regulator of Social Housing has consulted on 4 proposed Consumer Standards (*consultation ends 17 October, outcome expected February 2024*):
 1. Quality & Safety Standard
 2. **Transparency, Influence & Accountability Standard**
 3. Neighbourhood & Community Standard
 4. Tenancy Standard

Transparency, Influence & Accountability Standard

- *Registered Providers must give tenants a wide range of meaningful opportunities to influence and scrutinise their landlord's strategies, policies and services.*
- *Registered providers, working with tenants, must regularly consider ways to improve and tailor their approach to delivering landlord services including tenant engagement. They must implement changes as appropriate to ensure services deliver the intended aims.*



Current THH Governance & Engagement structure



Option 1: Resident-led panel/board



Resident-led – formed of tenants and leaseholders without representation of Members independents though independent Chair an option

- **Remit:** advisory; challenge; raise issues; be consulted. [Not making recommendations to Cabinet].
- **Commitment:** medium
- **Workstream:** performance of housing management (operational); complaints
- **Potential advantages**

Simpler to establish; could be based on current Residents' Panel; less resource intensive to support; space for residents to discuss issues.

- **Potential disadvantages**

Need for strong & knowledgeable Chair; difficult to ensure diverse *and* representative; lack of technical expertise; concern with day-to-day issues rather than strategic matters of policy or service design; lack of concrete outcomes leading to recruitment/retention issues; harder to demonstrate residents influence to the Regulator.



Option 2: Mixed panel/board



Mixed Panel – representation from Members, independents and residents

- **Remit:** advisory; scrutinise; shape services; high-level consultation.
- **Commitment:** significant
- **Work stream:** policy; strategies; service delivery

Potential advantages

Democratic legitimacy via councillors; independents can bring specific skills and expertise; significant opportunity for residents to influence housing policy, strategy & decision-making and demonstrate this to the Regulator

Potential disadvantages

Relatively complex structure to set up and maintain; resource heavy; differences of emphasis between residents and councillors; difficulty of residents engaging with high-level/technical issues; residents in a minority overlooked or drowned out



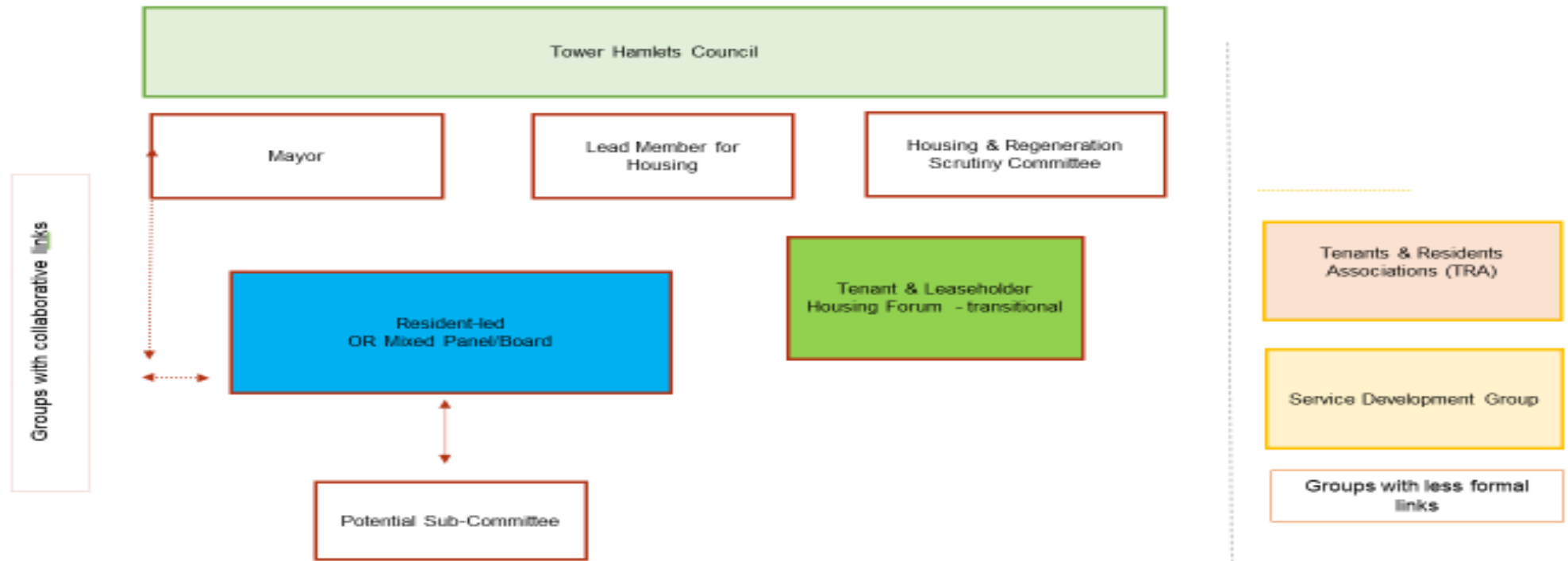
Demonstrating resident influence



- The council could encourage **current resident Board members** to sit on a new resident-led Panel thus retaining their sector and administrative knowledge and experience
- **Options to strengthen links** between the council's governance structure and whichever model of resident engagement is selected include:
 - Lead Member for Housing attends Panel meetings.
 - Council reports (e.g., Cabinet or Housing & Regeneration Scrutiny sub-committee reports) include consideration of issues relating to resident engagement/impact on residents wherever appropriate.
 - Establishing a mechanism for strategic resident input/concerns to be fed into relevant council meetings.
 - Commitment for officers or Members to attend specific Panel meetings to address these concerns.
 - Encouraging informal lines of communication between the council and the Panel.



Potential new engagement structure



Feedback on new engagement structure



The current Residents' Panel, Housing Management Joint Steering Group and THH Customer and Experience and Standards Committee provided feedback on the proposed models. The themes from the feedback include:

- Broad support for Option 1 - Residents led panel
- Clear ways to influence policy and decision making
- Training and support for resident members
- Suggestion Lead Member and senior officers attend Panel meetings in either model
- Independent experts to support residents
- Importance of diversity on the Panel
- Need to clearly demonstrate influence of resident on development of policies and procedures and decision making
- Critical that tenants' voices are heard and in majority on the Panel



Other LA engagement structures



Following the loss of the ALMO Board, it is typical for local authorities to create a new Board, to allow residents to influence policy, strategy and decision-making in relation to housing. The structure and function of these Boards varies but generally into two categories.

1. **A mixed board** with representation from a mixture of members, independents and tenants/leaseholders. This type of Board is more commonly seen in councils with a smaller social housing stock, like Gateshead, Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole and Kirklees. It was not seen in any of the London boroughs benchmarked.
1. **A resident led board**, with no member or independent participation, although members and senior officers might attend meetings. This is the model used by **Hackney, Lambeth and Waltham Forest**, although in slightly different forms. The Resident Board may have a direct channel of communication with the Lead Member, but not Cabinet as a whole.



Next steps



- HRSSC feedback on the options
- Briefing for Mayor & Lead Member
- THH in-house 1 November
- Tenant & Leaseholder Housing Forum 'live' – November
- Terms of Reference and recruitment December 2023 – February 2024
- New strategic engagement model 'live' from March 2024

