

ITEM 33: CALL-IN: BEST VALUE REVIEW OF HOUSING MANAGEMENT (FINAL VISION)

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 18TH DECEMBER 2002

DEPUTATION REQUEST FROM MR RICHARD LEE

The Council's Executive Committee meeting on Tuesday 3rd December is considering the Best Value Review of Housing Management. This includes proposals to close neighbourhood offices and to reduce the role of housing's community development section. These are major issues concerning tenants. However:

- the final report has not been forwarded to tenants associations, thereby denying TA's the opportunity to make representations to Executive members
- the tabled report does not include the results of consultation with the neighbourhood forums, trade unions etc which should be key information in assisting members to make the best decision. Section 26 of the report merely refers to the fact that there has been consultation, with the results available on request. Surely this is flawed.
- Appendix 2 of the report refers to the formal participation structures, under which it states that SBMETRO "provide support, advice and act as a voice to BME tenants and residents". However, the list of consultees in section 26 omits SBMETRO and inserts the Strategic Ethnic Alliance which is not a tenants organisation and which only exists as a sub-group of SAVO.
- Section 25 of the report says there are no legal implications arising from this report. This is untrue and probably the most serious issue. Since the report deals with substantial changes to the housing management functions, there are in housing law a number of legal and secondary regulation requirements to be followed in respect of consultation with tenants. One example is section 105 of the Housing Act 1985, and there are also other regulations which apply.

I would suggest that this report should be referred back, to return to the executive and council assembly with full sections on both consultation and the legal implications. Can we call back the report under the scrutiny function? If not, then there seems to be a case for maladministration.