

Item no:	Classification: Open	Date: September 25 2009	Decision Taker: Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Housing
Title of Report:		Tenants Fund Budget 2009-10	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		All	
From:		Strategic Director of Environment and Housing	

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the contents of the report prepared by the Tenant Fund Management Committee (TMFC) and submitted to Tenant Council at its meeting on 13 July 2009 together with the decision is noted (see appendices A and B).
2. That approval is given to the proposed Tenant Fund budget.
3. That such approval is conditional on the requirement that expenditure involving the procurement of external services is subject to compliance with current internal governance requirements and procurement and financial practices.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

4. The TFMC is a sub-group of Tenant Council that is re-elected annually at its Annual General Meeting. The sub-group considers proposals for the funding of projects and schemes as well as financial support to individual Tenants and Residents Associations (TRAs).
5. The report to Tenant Council provides a summary of the proposed expenditure for this financial year. This expenditure is funded exclusively from within the Housing Revenue Account (HRA). A summary of the individual budget elements is contained within the report together with commentary on each item.
6. The primary expenditure for the year includes:
 - Payments to TRAs: this is to support associations to fund activities for tenants during the year. There is a set criteria which must be achieved before an application for funding can be agreed. This includes production of certificated accounts, the holding of a maximum sum within the TRA's bank account and compliance with its constitution, including the holding of annual general meetings as checked and verified by the local Resident Involvement team.
 - The funding for Southwark Group of Tenants Organisations (SGTO) as recommended by TFMC.

- Tenants Conference: an annual event, organised and managed by a sub-committee of Tenant Council, which offers all tenant representatives the opportunity to plan and discuss specific or current issues related to housing, tenant participation and local communities.
7. Appendix A of this report contains a copy of TFMC's report to Tenant Council on 13 July 2008. Appendix B contains the draft minutes of that Tenant Council meeting, which record the comments made and their recommendation.
 8. Tenant Council debated the report and the recommendation was as follows:

“Recommendation:

Chair moved that Tenant Council agree the Tenant Fund Budget and forward it to area housing forums for information only.

Agreed with one vote against.”

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

9. Since the TFMC and Tenant Council meetings referred to in items seven and eight above, the carry forward has been clarified - following the year-end budget closure - as £154,590, marginally higher than the £150,000 that had been estimated. The extra amount generated, £4,590, has been assigned to the contingency reserve, which had formerly been £0.
10. The approval of this report will allow funding to be released immediately for the various elements of the proposals and to ensure that the schemes and costs are incurred within this financial year.
11. It should be noted that discussions around the contributions of home owners to the fund are continuing. Contributions from home owners are not included in the budget figure contained within the report and will remain separate pending the outcome of these discussions. A joint meeting of TFMC and Home owner Fund Management Committee (HOFMC) representatives is being arranged in September to resolve this matter.

COMMUNITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

12. The tenant fund is the pooled total of the small weekly payment that each tenant of the council pays towards resident involvement within their rent. Comparable financial contributions are made by Council leaseholders within their service charges. The money is used to finance the development and support of tenants and residents organisations in Southwark.
13. The tenant and resident bodies are mainly focused on local estate communities with common interests. In addition, the SGTO is a borough-wide group representing tenants and residents.
14. In addition to supporting individual TRAs and SGTO, the funding is used for training, resident's resource centers and an annual tenants conference.

15. It has been a concern for some time that people from some groups may be more likely to participate in TRAs than people from other groups (for example young people seem to be less likely to be involved than older people). This can mean that the composition of a TRA does not reflect the diversity of its local area. The resident involvement team is working actively to promote the involvement of all residents in tenant and resident associations. The team is also working to build community cohesion and good relations between members of different groups, especially where tensions and difficulties have arisen.

SUPPLEMENTARY ADVICE FROM OTHER OFFICERS

Strategic Director of Communities, Law & Governance (SB0909)

16. The Strategic Director of Communities, Law & Governance notes the content of this report. With regard to the recommendation contained in paragraph 3 concerning the proposed procurement of external services, the Council's Contract Standing Orders state that, where the estimated contract value is from £5,000 to £75,000, there is a requirement to take all reasonable steps to obtain at least three written quotes unless the Lead Contract Officer decides that this will not secure value for money. In such cases, a Gateway 1 report must be completed to explain what alternative action is being taken and why.

Financial Director (AE/ fin0511)

17. The Tenant's Fund budget is ring fenced within the HRA. The total budget allocation for 2009/10 is £593, 964. This figure is comprised of a base budget of £439,374 and a carry forward allocation of £154,590. Appendix A shows the proposed allocation between various spending heads.
18. It should be noted that whilst the planned expenditure of £589, 364 for 2009 /10 represents 99% of total available resources, on a recurring basis this level of commitment would exceed the annual base budget of £439, 374 by approx. 35%. It is important this budgeted is well managed to minimise the possibility of overspending, and it is suggested that quarterly revenue monitors are presented to TFMC.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
Notes and minutes of the TFMC Meetings	Rotherhithe Area Housing Office, 159 Abbeyfield Street, London SE16 2LS	Barry Assinder 0207 525 1716
Minutes of Tenants Council	Bermondsey Area Housing Office, 19 Spa Road, SE16 3SA	Jo Wilson 0207 525 3326

APPENDICES

Appendix	Title
A	Tenant Fund Budget 2009/10
B	Tenant Council Meeting Minutes 13 July 2009

Audit Trail

Lead Officer	Gill Davies, Strategic Director of Environment and Housing		
Report Author	Margaret O'Brien, Head of Housing Management		
Version	Final		
Dated	September 2009		
Key Decision?	Yes	If yes, date appeared on forward plan	August 2009
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / EXECUTIVE MEMBER			
Officer Title	Comments Sought	Comments included	
Strategic Director of Communities, Law & Governance	Yes	Yes	
Finance Director	Yes	Yes	
Executive Member	No	No	
Date final report sent to Constitutional Officer			September 25 2009